

GOD'S BALANCE OF
FAITH AND FREEDOM

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WATERMAN

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MARY FITCH PAGE LECTURES, 1910

**God's Balance of Faith and Freedom**





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# GOD'S BALANCE OF FAITH AND FREEDOM

*Being the Mary Fitch Page Lectures at the  
Berkeley Divinity School  
1910*

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By the  
REV. LUCIUS WATERMAN, D.D.

*Rector of St. Thomas' Church, Hanover, N. H.*

*With Introduction by*  
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*This Little Book is dedicated to  
A Valued Friend*

EDWARD AUGUSTUS RENOUF, D.D.

*Rector Emeritus of St. James's, Keene, N. H.*

*who in ninety-two years of life has seen more than most men  
of the*

DIVINE DRAMA

*of Human Progress, and in the Mystery thereof  
has borne a wise man's part.*



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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE COURTESY of the author, and his modesty, mark of the genuine scholar, in requesting of me some word of introduction, I do not fail to appreciate. None the less am I sure no such word is necessary. Dr. Waterman needs no introduction. His reputation as a scholar is assured. This book will, I am confident, be recognized as the work of a conscientious scholar. Its readers will find that the author has proceeded with characteristic sanity, not carried away by feeling or prejudice. Those who may not agree with him will not, I venture to think, be inclined to deny his intention to be fair and reasonable.

The book deals with the fascinating subject of the relations of authority and liberty, of faith and freedom. Here, it is claimed, there is to be found a balance just and true. The author accepts a faith once for all delivered and gives his reasons for this acceptance. He is, however, a scholar who, for the sake of truth, stands fast in the freedom for which Christ made him free and courageously faces any issue that may be raised.

In the exercise of authority the Church has made grave mistakes and disastrous failures. This the author fully recognizes and nothing extenuates. Touching the general trend and import of Christian history, he is interesting and suggestive. He opens up a large and

luminous view. Surely, too, his is a noble conception of the fellowship of freemen in Christ. It might find expression in the words which St. Augustine gathered out of St. Cyprian into the pregnant phrase: *Salvo jure communionis diversa sentire*.<sup>\*</sup> It is in the spirit of genuine catholicity. It is the inspiring conception of a Church at once Catholic and free, maintaining for faith the things that are of faith and conceding to freedom the things which belong to freedom, a Church wherein men may be steadfastly loyal to the old faith and also hospitably open-minded to the light that is ever new.

I have pride in recalling that these lectures were first heard at the Berkeley Divinity School, and I am glad the opportunity is now given to a wider public to enjoy the privilege of reading them.

CHAUNCEY B. BREWSTER.

Hartford, Connecticut.

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<sup>\*</sup> *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, VI., vii., 10.



## PREFACE.

IN THE discussion of the subject of the Title-page of the Prayer Book in the recent General Convention of that portion of the Catholic Church which is commonly known as the Episcopal Church, a clerical deputy (Rev. Roland Cotton Smith, of St. John's, Washington, D. C.) made an eloquent plea in behalf of the word "Protestant." He said that the welfare of God's people rests on a fine balance of two opposing forces, the force of authority and law and order on one side, and the force of individual liberty and responsibility on the other. The word "Catholic," he said, represented one of these forces, and the word "Protestant" represented the other. We needed both.

The writer of these Lectures feels that the balance so finely indicated by Dr. Smith is the great (unrecognized) need of our American religious life. To him the word "Catholic" stands for that very balance. Such he believes to be the historical connotation of that great word in the beginning. On the other hand, the word "Protestant" seems to the Page Lecturer of 1910 to be shifting from connoting simply a conviction that the Church of the Middle Age needed a reform (a conviction which this Lecturer holds, and which probably every member of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies recently in session

in Cincinnati shares with him) to connoting a conviction that there is no such thing as revelation in this world and no such thing as authority, but that every man in every age has his inspirations from God our Father, and that the world's progress depends on every man's following the best suggestions that he can find within himself. Not all Protestants have come to this conclusion, but when one asks what is included in "our common Protestantism," one can find nothing more definite than a very vague belief in God, and a belief in good men. Manifestly, Protestantism is a great force moving rapidly in the direction of "Individualism Unchecked."

The Lecturer wishes to express his indebtedness to Rev. Hiram Van Kirk, an Instructor in the Berkeley Divinity School, for reminding him that the baptismal formula of St. Matt. xxviii. 20 is found in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, and to Rev. W. P. Ladd, Professor of Church History, for the further suggestion that in the very same chapter of the *Teaching* in which the use of the full form of words is ordered, the Baptism is described as a baptizing "into the Name of the Lord." Both these points have been added to the second Lecture since its delivery. The Lecturer is under obligation to Rev. George T. Linsley, of Hartford, for sending him the quotation on "Toleration" which adorns page 137.

For an extremely opposite view of the Council of Nicaea to that given in Lecture II., students may be referred to an Article by Professor J. A. Faulkner, D.D., of Drew Theological Seminary, in the *American Journal of Theology* for January, 1910. The title of the Article is *The First Great Christian Creed*, and it gives the impression that the Council of Nicaea was very much like a modern political convention. The two seriously different statements of fact made in that Article and in these Lectures, respectively, may perhaps be reconciled after all, if

one will remember that the unanimity asserted in the Lectures is a unanimity as to what the delivered Faith was, and the discussion and disputation was about the questions whether Arius had really departed from it, and how it should be expressed in a new form of words to make it more clear. It is noted in these Lectures also (on page 90) that there were even at Nicæa a very few Bishops who had already adopted the idea that a changeable faith was a better thing for the Church to have.

Returning to the main thesis of this book, the writer desires to present a quotation from the London *Guardian*, from an editorial on its sixtieth anniversary: "The policy of the *Guardian*," so says the editorial writer, "has been founded upon the assurance that the traditional attitude of the English Church is the right one for Englishmen, and not without value and far-reaching influence for the rest of Christendom. Loyalty to that attitude involves a reverent acceptance of the guidance of authority in matters of belief, together with an open-minded readiness to look for the fresh light which is always to be expected from a better understanding of history, from the gradual disclosures of science, and from the hardly-won results of experience. The English Church has often been described as the home of the old faith and the new learning."

"*The old faith and the new learning!*" That is what we need for America, too—a Church of generous embrace and faithful memory, which can hold not only many people, and people of opposite minds and temperaments, but the combination of the new learning with the faith delivered once for all. "God send us some one to say that thing, and to show the way to it, a hundredfold more effectively than I ever could," is the prayer of the writer of this book.

LUCIUS WATERMAN.

Hanover, N. H., November 21, 1910.



## THE DELIVERED FAITH.

### IN TWO FORMS OF MEMORANDUM.

#### AN EASTERN FORM.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible :

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God ; Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God ; Begotten, not made ; Being of one substance with the Father ; By whom all things were made :

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man :

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate ; He suffered and was buried :

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures :

And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father :

#### A WESTERN FORM.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord :

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary :

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried :

He descended into hell ; the third day He rose again from the dead :

He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty :

And He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father;\* Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets:

I believe in the Holy Ghost:

And we believe one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church:

The Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints:

We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins:

The Forgiveness of Sins:

And we look for the Resurrection of the dead;

The Resurrection of the body:

And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

And the Life everlasting. Amen.

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\* The words *and the Son*—in Latin, *Filioque*—were added here by all the Western Churches, beginning with Spain, in the period of the Dark Ages, in the time between the middle of the sixth and the middle of the ninth century. Western theologians generally consider the added phrase logically necessary to a complete statement of the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity. At any rate the phrase was added to the Creed unconstitutionally, and is *not* a part of the Catholic Witness to the Catholic Faith.

Two other variations from the version of the "Nicene Creed" in the Book of Common Prayer may be noted here. Eastern creeds say "We believe," not "I believe," and our omission of the word "Holy" before "Catholic and Apostolic Church" seems to have been a matter of misunderstanding.

## I.

- I. The Balance a Key to the Meaning of Church History.
- II. The Keeping of the Balance in the First Three Centuries.





## SYLLABUS OF LECTURE I.

The Church has a finely adjusted balance of a fixed faith, in few articles, divinely revealed and so infallible, and a free theology covering all the remaining field of religious thought. The history of the Church is largely a history of the Church's success or failure in keeping this balance according to the divine plan.

### I.

#### THE DRAMA OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY DIVIDED INTO ITS ACTS.

History, an evolution, a divine Drama. The acts of it may be laid out as follows: From the beginning to A. D. 300, Period of Simple Reception of a Revealed Faith; A. D. 300-800, Period of Dogmatic Intolerance Defensive (the Church insists on the faith given from God); A. D. 800-1500, Period of Dogmatic Intolerance Offensive (the Church insists on her own leading ideas); since A. D. 1500, Period of Disintegration and Confusion, running out into Agnosticism.

### II.

#### THE PERIOD OF SIMPLE RECEPTION.

"Not a time when everybody thought alike."

A. Examples of free theology. (1) Origen not called a heretic for his Restorationist opinions. (2) Justin Martyr speaks of a pre-millennial Advent as revealed by God, but acknowledges those who do not accept the idea as good Chris-

tians. In next century Dionysius the Great scorns that same idea, but does not exclude those who hold it.

B. With all this freedom, the Church holds to a fixed faith which every Christian is bound to believe. This shown from (*a*) Irenaeus in Gaul, (*b*) Tertullian at Carthage, and (*c*) Clement and Origen for the Alexandrian School.

## LECTURE I.

### I.—THE BALANCE A KEY TO THE MEANING OF CHURCH HISTORY.

### II.—THE KEEPING OF THE BALANCE IN THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES.

ST. JUDE 3.—Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

GAL. v. 1.—For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore.

### INTRODUCTION.—THE BALANCE STATED.

I am to speak to you in these Lecture Sermons for 1910 concerning the balance of faith and freedom in the Catholic Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. And first, in these days of sadly perverted uses of some great words, I must say what I mean by "The Catholic Church."

There are two ways of defining that phrase, with reference to the Church's membership and with reference to the Church's order, just as there are two great descriptions of the Church, as the Body of Christ and

as the Kingdom of Christ. Viewed as the *Body* of Christ, the Catholic Church is the great company of all persons who have been baptized with water, "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," by an authorized person, that is to say, by one who has received Christ's Baptism, and who uses the Divine Names honestly in their ancient Christian meaning. There is probably not a town in New England where there are not members of this "Holy Catholic Church," but they will be found hidden under many names, and sometimes under very strange names. Viewed as the *Kingdom* of Christ, the Catholic Church is an organization which maintains a certain divine order. Somewhat as a modern organization is very apt to have a Constitution and By-Laws, the Constitution being its more fundamental law which cannot be changed without particularly careful consideration and particularly large consent, and the By-Laws covering lesser matters, which may be ordered according to the wish of varying majorities from time to time, so, I have been taught, the Catholic Church has certain elements given from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, which may be said to belong to the Church's Constitution, and other elements which may be freely changed by the Church, or by any natural division of the Church, as, for example, by the Church of a particular nation. Things which belong to the Constitution of the Church, having been settled by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, may not be changed. And such things, I have been taught again, include both a fixed faith and a settled order. The fixed faith includes but few articles. The settled order includes but few requirements. But those few articles and those few requirements are of God. If any member of the Catholic Church withholds his assent from some part of God's faith, or assists in maintaining some or-

ganization in contradiction of God's order, he is certainly an irregular member of the Catholic Church, and his organization, thus maintained, is, to say the least, not "a natural division" of the Catholic Church.

And here let me offer a suggestion as to the meaning of that great word "Catholic." It is commonly said to mean "Universal." "The word means neither more nor less than Universal," says Bishop Lightfoot (Ignatius L., 413). Even against a *dictum*, albeit a passing *dictum*, of so great a man, I make bold to suggest that in the phrase "Catholic Church," "Catholic" means somewhat less than "Universal," and also somewhat more. The phrase appears to us first in a letter of St. Ignatius, the martyr Bishop of Antioch, early in the second century. Probably it was coined in that city famous for its cleverness in phrase-making, the city which first struck out the word *χριστιανοί* as a name for the followers of Christ, and probably also the phrase had been in use for some years. But certainly the Christian Church was not universal, it had not even had a fair hearing *everywhere*, no, not even everywhere in the Roman world, when Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch. It was certainly meant to be universal. Christians saw that. They felt the deep difference between the system of Judaism, God's plan for a single nation, and the system of Christianity, God's plan for all mankind. Well, then, when some of the Christians of Antioch composed that fine phrase, *ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία*, "the Catholic Church," I am sure that they did not mean "the *Universal* Church," which would have been a reckless exaggeration (or just the watchword of a pious hope, like "the World for Christ in the Twentieth Century"), but did mean "the Church *fitted to become* Universal," which was a noble truth.

Now the main thesis of these Lectures is that God

has made His Church Catholic in that sense, "fitted to become universal," "adapted to universal conquest and universal edifying," by the very fact that He has given it these two elements, of things bound and of things free, and a balance divinely wise between the one and the other. I know that among Protestant Christians (among such people as you, my brethren, will meet most frequently in your ministry), there is a double prejudice against such a thesis. The "man in the street" in our American religious discussions has no idea that our Lord left any particular body of doctrine for His followers to believe, or any particular organization for them to follow. And further, this modern American is quite sure that it is far better so. He dotes on the idea of liberty. He feels confident that it is better for a man to make any number of mistakes in seeking truth freely, than in any particular to be told the truth and held to believing it, on authority. In answer to this last form of prejudice—if prejudice ever can be answered—I wish that I could ask my Protestant friend to note how the glories of modern science would have been rendered impossible, if scientific men had all refused to accept anything as true which they had not proved for themselves. Science has a creed quite as long as ours, which every scientist assumes as the basis of all his scientific life. "But the scientific man knows that *his* creed is *true*," I shall be told. Well, at least, he thinks that a creed which one can know to be true *is* really a help to progress! Then I go on, and in answer to that other pre-judgment that God has not given us anything fixed, that the Church has no unchangeable Constitution, I shall in these Lectures offer something by way of evidence which has appealed to my own mind. I shall not undertake to set forth the Church's fixed order as to organization, administration, sacrament. I am con-

cerned at this time just to show what I believe that God has made constitutional for His Church in the matter of a revealed faith, and in fact what is the divine plan for balancing a fixed creed against a free theology.

When I speak of a revealed faith, it will be understood that I refer to a body of doctrines—perhaps I might better say, a group of facts—which have been enshrined in many forms, and are for us sufficiently represented in the particular forms called “the Apostles’ Creed” and “the Nicene Creed” in our Prayer Book. Some of these facts are matters of revelation, and some only of simple observation, in themselves. Thus, the existence of God is a fact revealed. Processes of argument may be constructed to prove it. No man’s belief in God really rests on such arguments, I am sure. All our belief in God runs back to a revelation of God in a forgotten past. The Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, if He really taught it, as the Church says He did, was necessarily a new revelation made by Him, and so was the distinct Personality of the Holy Spirit of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments. Such things are beyond human discovery and human invention. On the other hand, such facts as the suffering and death of our Lord, and even His resurrection from the tomb, are matters of human observation. But the facts contained in our Catholic Creeds, whether themselves revealed or simply observed, are said to constitute a revealed faith for this further reason, that the choice of these particular facts to constitute a central body of necessary truths was made by our Lord Himself,—at least that is the claim that I am advancing,—and the idea that men must agree in receiving this central body of truths in order to be eligible for admission into God’s Kingdom on earth was a matter of revelation from our Lord. I must allow that, so far as formulated phrases



are concerned, our Lord may never have gone beyond the baptismal formula, requiring faith in "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Very probably He never gave His Apostles any larger Creed of settled phrase. It is a part of the claim that I am setting forth, that our Lord did make it clear to His Church's mind and heart how much was meant to be included under this formula as the necessary faith of Christians, and it is a further element of this claim that all the Church's after-developments in the way of creed,—all, I mean, that have attained to catholic acceptance,—have been exercises of a divinely guarded memory. On the other hand, I expressly disclaim the modern Roman conception of the Church as a body having a power of divinely inspired judgment, which can at any time proclaim with infallible authority, new truth which had never been proclaimed with such authority before.<sup>1</sup> The fixed faith which I am to hold up before you is what St. Jude held it to be—a delivered faith, and a remembered faith. Our Lord alone has authority to deliver a faith by which men's consciences shall be bound. The Church has no power but to remember what she has from Him received.

Such is the divine balance of faith and freedom. Here is a fixed faith, of few articles, given from God for the heart of His people to rest on. Here is all the remaining field of speculative thought left open for a free theology to work in. Certainly men need freedom, that they may learn to think, and to value truth as an object of difficult acquisition. Certainly, also, they need "certainty"—*some* certainty—that they may have

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<sup>1</sup> In an editorial in the *Boston Transcript* of November 20, 1909, I saw this phrase: "The theory of Catholicity is that its Divine Founder authorized His disciples to create a living and perpetual Church, inside of which there would always be divinely appointed teachers and rulers, who would speak in the voice of the risen Christ." That is meant to claim for the Church a "living voice," which can decide new questions with infallible authority. It is precisely Roman doctrine, *not* "Catholic."



anchorage and confidence, and a ground of unity amid their free diversity, and that with all their mistakes, they may not too pitifully "run in vain." God has given us both freedom and certainty, and each in due measure. It is my purpose in these Lectures, first to show this balance as a key to the meaning of the Church's history through nineteen centuries, and then to follow the course of that history in a sort of bird's-eye view, showing a little more largely how this divine plan has fared in Christian men's trusteeship through the ages. In the present Lecture I shall deal with two chief subjects: The Balance, a Key to the Meaning of Church History, and the Keeping of the Balance in the First Three Centuries.

#### I.—THE DRAMA OF HISTORY DIVIDED INTO ITS ACTS.

May I be pardoned a personal reminiscence? These Lectures had their first beginning almost exactly twenty-seven years ago, on a railroad train in Indiana. I had been asked to become a Professor of Church History in a Theological School of the Middle West, and I was coming from a visit to the Institution, with a heart on fire. "What can I do for those students?" I said to myself. "How can I set the History of the Church of Christ before them so that it will be to them a living thing?" I felt that History was not a mere succession of events, nor even (though this is certainly a higher conception) a chain of causes and effects. Somewhat vaguely, I felt that History was an evolution, with large meanings, which it required centuries to unfold. "How," I said, "shall I set the centuries before my students, so that they shall see, more vividly than I was ever shown it, not only what these rolling years contain, but what is the real thought of the great drama which they are producing, whose true Author is Almighty God?" And

then I began to divide my History into periods—that is, to lay out the Acts of this divine Drama, so far as it has gone, asking myself what its larger meanings might seem to be. There are two turning points in the History of the Church, which every student perceives to be of first importance. He may not be able to explain their significance, but he feels that there is a marked difference between the time before and the time after these epochal points. One of these turning points stands at the beginning of the fourth Christian century, and one at the beginning of the sixteenth. One turning point is the calling of the first General Council, the first Council of Nicaea, or if you prefer to put it so, the Conversion of Constantine, and the seating of Christianity on the throne of the Caesars. The other turning point is the breaking into flame of the Reformation-Movement. But how about those twelve hundred years between? I have always tried to urge upon Christian people that the Church of Christ, wherever we meet with it, is in some true sense a part of that “Jerusalem which is above,” “which is the mother of us all.” The Church of the late Middle Age is not to be regarded as a part of some wholly alien body, “the Roman Church,” to which we do not belong, but as a part of the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, to which we do belong. It is a fearful mistake, though scholars who are in some lines great scholars are constantly making it, to speak of the Church of the Middle Ages as “the Roman Church,” or to *call* it “the Catholic Church,” which it really was, and *mean* “the Roman Church,” which (with all its Papacy) it was not. It was “the Catholic Church of the West,” and it broke into fragments, one very abnormal one being the (very modern) “Church of Rome.” Nevertheless, I have to acknowledge to myself that that Church of the late Middle Age is a Church for which I must be continually

apologizing. I feel that it is the Church going wrong. On the other hand, the Church that I saw assembled at Nicaea was a Church with which I could sympathize, and a Church in which I could glory. What had made the difference? And where—a most important point—where had the difference come in? Now the superficial student may point to the particular theological opinions of the later Middle Age as putting the Church of those days outside the pale of our sympathy. But that would be to give a most shallow and unscientific answer. Theological opinions do not make or unmake a Church. The opinions of Saint Thomas à Kempis and Saint Thomas Aquinas, the opinions of Bishop Fisher and well-beloved Sir Thomas More, were not the reason, nor any reasonable reason, why the Church of the later Middle Ages should seem to have become unworthy of our sympathy and admiration. It was not the Church's actual fashions of thought in the fifteenth century that made necessary the Reformation of the sixteenth. It was, broadly, the fact that the Church would not tolerate any other opinions than those which it had adopted as its general fashion. Suppression of human freedom, intolerance, and persecution toward all who ventured to be a minority, that was the real vice of the Church of the Middle Age.

But some one may say—if I were lecturing in some Divinity Schools, I should almost expect to hear the walls cry out,—“Was not the Church of the Nicene Age intolerant? What do you mean? If the Church had a right to expel Arius in the fourth century, why not Cranmer or Luther or Calvin in the sixteenth?” The answer is very simple, and for myself I may say that all my philosophy of history, of the Church's history at least, turns upon it. During the period of the General Councils the Church was contending earnestly “for the

faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." That was a great duty. Then, unhappily, the Church, having learned the habit of saying to people, "You must think thus and so," went on from saying that "*You must*" concerning the faith revealed by God, and began to say the same thing, in the same tone of voice, about the theology worked out by leading men. If the earlier intolerance was a great duty, this later intolerance was a great sin. In that transition from a great justice to a great oppression, I found what seemed to me the true crisis, marking off one Act in the divine Drama from another, in the midst of that space between the first Nicene Council and the Reformation. I put the dividing line roughly at the year 800 of the Christian era. Most historians, I think, make a great dividing-line at the year 590, the year when Gregory the Great became Bishop of Rome, or roundly at the year 600. Their idea is to mark off broadly the end of the old Roman and Greek civilization, and the beginning of Modern History, the emerging of a new Europe from the muddy flood of the barbarian invasions, and the building up of a new civilization. I can only say that the difference which I have just suggested seems to me a more fundamental difference in the life of God's Kingdom than even the largest difference in the material on which the Kingdom had to work. I, at least, could see no otherwise. So I found myself with my great dividing lines laid down, with four acts of the drama of history laid out. I had then to ask myself what was the true significance of each.

Remembering that we are in the fourth act now, and that none of us can tell how long it will be, our play covers so far nineteen Christian centuries. The first act covers three centuries, the second five, the third seven. Or we may say that the Church has climbed by

a series of stairs toward the Throne of God. It will be a help to memory if you can fix in your minds these successive flights of three and five and seven steps, each step a century of years. I shall call the first Period, to the year 300 of our era, the Period of Simple Reception. I shall call the time from A. D. 300 to A. D. 1500 the Age of Dogmatism, and then I shall divide it into two further Periods—a Period which I shall call “the Period of Dogmatic Intolerance Defensive,” in which the Church is fiercely intolerant of any departure from the faith which God has given to the Church to keep—that will last from the year 300 to the year 800—and a Period which I shall call “the Period of Dogmatic Intolerance Offensive”—seven centuries from A. D. 800 to A. D. 1500, in which the Church grows more and more to be intolerant of any departure from fashions of thought which are merely the Church’s own. That was a tyranny, and from that tyranny men revolted with a just revolt.

This revolt, of which I am speaking, was limited, it may be said, to the Protestant world, which is but a small part of the Christian world. True, but first the rise of Protestantism has been so great a feature of the period of Christian History in which our lot is cast as really to have given that history its prevailing character for three centuries, and in our day the same kind of revolt is agitating all the Latin countries, only with a far more deadly loss of faith, modern civilization grown up taking the disease harder than modern civilization in its infancy. I call this “the Period of Disintegration and Confusion, running out to Agnosticism.” Perhaps this will seem to you an unreasonably severe judgment. You know a great many pious people who are serenely sure of a fair number of religious beliefs. Yes! But very likely there is not one person in my present



audience who has accepted as a philosophic basis of religious thought the *dictum*, "Nobody can be infallibly sure of anything." But that *dictum* is, I think, accepted by nearly all thinkers who think at all clearly and carefully in our Protestant Churches of to-day, and while a man may hold that *dictum*, and yet (somewhat illogically) feel very sure of a number of religious beliefs himself, it cannot be very surprising if many who so hold have no deep convictions of religious truth at all. And, at any rate, I will venture to ask, "What thoughtful observer does not know that a great change has been going on in the direction of the dropping of religious beliefs in the last fifty years, and that that change gathers volume and force, and does not stop with the minor differences of theology, but swallows up men's old beliefs concerning the Godhead of our Lord Jesus, and the very existence of a God who answers prayer"? But I must reserve the fuller consideration of this Fourth Period for my last Lecture. To-day I address myself to the pleasanter subject of the First Period—the Age of Simple Reception of a Revealed Faith.

## II.—HOW THE BALANCE FARED IN THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES.

"Simple Reception!" I think I hear some one say. "Simple Reception! Is the Lecturer dreaming? Does he imagine that even in the first three centuries all men who accepted Jesus of Nazareth as a source of inspiration, received also the traditional beliefs now enshrined in the Catholic Creeds? Does he think that there was ever a model Church, in which all men thought alike?" No! I dream neither of these dreams. I suppose that the first two Christian centuries were a time of as much

unrest, of as much breaking down of old religious beliefs and systems, and invention of new religious beliefs and systems, as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are. And as with the twentieth century, so with the second, many new religions professed to be founded on the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, and to be a better representation of His real teaching than the system of the Catholic Church. But what is true of the twentieth century is true of the second century also—these new religions have no historic connection with our Lord. Granting for the sake of argument that certain recent interpretations of the meaning of Jesus of Nazareth are right, we must still say that that is a mere happen-so. Their interpretation cannot be traced back to Him. It certainly did not come to them from Him. They do not even find it in the earliest Christian writings that have come down to us. They get it by a process which they call “reconstructing the history,” or in simpler language, “making a guess.” There was plenty of that sort of religious thought even in the second century. By “Simple Reception,” then, I do not mean for a moment that the world accepted the Christian Gospel, nor even that all who attempted to follow the Lord Jesus as a teacher received the faith of “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,” but I do say that in this first period there stood before the eyes of men as a plain historical fact one single Church, known to men as having proceeded from the mind and hand of Jesus Christ, and that that Church professed to be the Kingdom of God on earth, and that if a man wanted to enter the Kingdom, it was made perfectly clear to him that he must receive that body of truths or facts which we now find in our Apostles’ Creed. The idea that a man could be received into the Church, thus claiming to have been founded by the Lord Jesus, without receiving the faith

set forth by the Lord Jesus, did not enter into any man's head.

But this Church of the First Age was not "a Church in which everybody thought alike." A fixed faith consisting of selected articles really implies a free theology in all things else. That ought to have been perceived always in the Church. And the Church of this First Age was a model Church in this very particular, that it recognized the Founder's faith and the Founder's freedom as well. Let me illustrate that freedom by two examples from the history of these early centuries. Both will exhibit free philosophizing and free exegesis, but they will show different relations of these two elements of thought.

*A.—The Conviction of the First Three Centuries as to a Free Theology.*

1. I shall take first an example of free theological speculation, beginning, probably, in philosophy, and going on secondarily to Scriptural exegesis. It is well known that the great Alexandrian teacher, Origen, put out suggestions that possibly Almighty God might be able to bring all men to repentance, and so to salvation ultimately, even though it had to be by the bitter discipline of Hell. Origen even hazarded a conjecture that Satan himself and all his evil spirits might be brought within the scope of the Divine Mercy. He held that Scriptural phrases about punishment continuing for "aeons of aeons" might leave room for some future aeons in which punishment should have done its work and ceased to be.<sup>2</sup> In other words, Origen was, at least tentatively and

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<sup>2</sup> *Of. St. Matt. xii. 32*, where our Lord says of a man's speaking against the Holy Ghost, "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this aeon, nor in that which is to come." But there are many aeons.



in some moods, a Universalist. It may be added that Origen did more to form the mind of Christian scholars in the East for a hundred years after he began to be known as a teacher, than any other scholar that appeared within all that time. One even finds occasional traces of this particular opinion of his in some few Christian leaders of the third and fourth centuries. On the other hand, it would seem that the opinion of an endless continuance of evil, and therefore of pain and punishment, was always the opinion of the rank and file of the Church, and of the large majority of the Church's teachers.

How, then, did this supposedly overwhelming majority in the Church treat Origen's Restorationist speculations? And the answer is, "Certainly, not as heresy." This is the more noteworthy because St. Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. I. x.) in telling what the Church's necessary faith is, expressly includes as one of the purposes of the resurrection, that our Lord is to send the wicked "into everlasting fire." The uncareful reader would suppose that endless torment was there recognized as part of the Catholic Faith. But no! The word which we render "everlasting" or "eternal" is a word of ambiguous meaning, and the Church did not hold that it had received an additional revelation, beyond the recorded utterances of our Lord, clearing that ambiguity.

Origen himself had a stormy career, as is well known. He was ordained to the priesthood by certain Bishops in Palestine in a way that was decidedly irregular. His own Bishop at Alexandria protested vehemently, and persuaded a company of Egyptian Bishops to declare Origen deposed from this ministry, and even excommunicate. Uncareful modern writers are apt to say that this condemnation was founded on charges of irregularity *and heresy*. The modern writer is particu-

larly likely to be so entirely out of sympathy with the Church of the first centuries that he uses "heresy" and "false doctrine" as synonymous terms. He knows that many persons in Alexandria must have differed sharply from Origen in many points. He takes it for granted that if Origen was deposed and excommunicated, it must have been on the ground of "heresy" in part. But the fact remains that there is no record left to show, and no sufficient reason to believe, that Origen's condemnation at Alexandria, concurred in afterwards by the Church of law-abiding Rome, was founded on any charge of heresy, or even of dangerous teaching, at all. On the other hand, the Churches of Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Achaia turned to scorn the Alexandrian condemnation, and paid no heed to it, and we do not discover the least intimation that they were regarded as having apostatized from the faith in doing so, even by the angry Bishop of Alexandria. Indeed, the successor of Origen in the leadership of the Alexandrian theological school was Heraclas, an old pupil of Origen, nominated by Origen himself, and Heraclas was not only not displaced from that position, but within two years after Origen's condemnation himself became Bishop of Alexandria. Another pupil of Origen, Dionysius, succeeded Heraclas in the headship of the school, and sixteen years afterwards, in the bishopric, and although neither Heraclas nor Dionysius seems ever to have tried to have Origen's condemnation as a law-breaker reversed, we do find Dionysius addressing a letter "on Martyrdom" to his old friend and teacher a little before Origen's death. Nay, even in the far more controversial and more rigid conditions of one hundred and fifty years later, in the second half of the fourth century, we find Jerome, himself inclined to be both rigid and controversial in a high degree, quoting Origen's suggestion

that even Satan might come to be saved, without showing any sense of its being an intolerable utterance.<sup>3</sup> Certainly the Church of the first three centuries could distinguish between what might seem very regrettable bad theology, and "heresy" denying something of the faith.

2. I turn to an example of free theology beginning, probably, with differences of exegesis. St. John in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation speaks of seeing the souls of the martyrs and all the company of God's faithful people, "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." This has been understood to say that at our Lord's Second Coming He will raise the faithful dead to bodily life, and set up a Kingdom of holiness with His Church for a period of a thousand years, and then (after a final outburst of the powers of evil, described in the same chapter) raise up the rest of the dead, and bring them to the final judgment. Most modern commentators say, however, that the "first resurrection" of this passage is the resurrection of the soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, referred to in the Gospel according to St. John (v. 25), "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." The "thousand years" is then said to be a mystical representation of the whole period during which such resurrections are going on, from the First Advent to the Second Advent. I cannot forbear to quote that vigorous controversialist, the late Dean Alford, on this point. "If," he says, "In a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain

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<sup>3</sup> Jerome came to be a bitter condemner of Origen in later years, and apologized for this very quotation in particular, saying that he was young then. See Lecture III., p. 101.

souls lived (  $\psi \nu \chi \alpha \iota \ \epsilon \zeta \eta \sigma \alpha \nu$  ) at the first, and the rest of the dead lived (  $\nu \epsilon \kappa \rho \omicron \iota \ \epsilon \zeta \eta \sigma \alpha \nu$  ) only after the end of a specified period after that first—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Holy Scripture is wiped out as a testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain; but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope” (Dean Alford, *Commentary on Revelation, in loco*).

Personally, I agree with Dean Alford down to the last words. But it is an uncareful exaggeration to say that “the whole primitive Church” held this opinion, and it is a curious illustration of uncareful modern dogmatism to call that mere opinion “an article of faith.” That is a very careless phrase for a theologian to use, and I have quoted it to illustrate more fully this very point. Some Christians in early days believed passionately in the two literal resurrections and the millennial reign between them. Others refused the whole idea as an idle dream, and (it may be added) found great difficulty in acknowledging that the Revelation could be a writing of St. John, or a canonical book of Holy Scripture at all, because they so much disliked this passage. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, writes thus in his “Dialogue with the Jew Trypho” (c. 80). Trypho, I may say, has asked him, “Do you really admit that this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt? And do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the

patriarchs?" "I admitted to you formerly," is Justin's answer, "that I and many others are of this opinion, and believe that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware; but, on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belonged to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise." Here are two groups of Christians, you see. One group holds one opinion, and the other group holds another opinion. But to Justin's mind they are all alike "true Christians," and "belong to the pure and pious faith." And this inclusiveness of his is not founded on any feeling that the question was really a doubtful question. Far from it. In the next chapter he gives his own conviction positively enough. "And further there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that after that the general, and in short, the eternal, resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place." Whether Justin's opponents in this matter differed in interpreting St. John, or whether they differed still more deeply, refusing to acknowledge the Revelation as a book of Holy Scripture, we do not know. At any rate, St. Justin counted these as good Christians as himself.

My illustrations from Justin Martyr would not be complete, however, if I did not show you how very differently he speaks of persons who did not accept what could rightly be called "an Article of the Faith." "Moreover," he says immediately after his mention of the "true Christians" who did not hold his particular theological opinions—"Moreover, I pointed out to you, that some who are called Christians, but are godless, impious heretics, teach doctrines that are every way blasphemous,



atheistical, and foolish. . . . I choose not to follow men or men's doctrines, but God and the doctrines delivered by Him. For if you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this truth, and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to Heaven, do not imagine that they are Christians." You may agree with St. Justin, or you may not. You must see, I think, that he at any rate drew a clear distinction between theology ("doctrines of men," in which he might have intense convictions of his own, but any good Christian was perfectly free to differ from him) and the faith, delivered by God, which no man could diminish by one jot, and be acknowledged as a Christian at all.

When Justin Martyr was writing, in the middle of the second century, his opinions were those of the majority of Christians, it would seem; but still he did not try to press them as necessary beliefs. Turn forward a hundred years in the History, and you will find an opposite state of things as to opinion, but the same spirit of tolerance. Dionysius the Great was Pope of Alexandria about the year 260, and his attention was called to the fact that in some rural neighborhoods in Egypt the opinion of two resurrections and a millennial reign was still strongly entrenched. It was a discarded and despised opinion in Alexandria, and Dionysius evidently regarded it as both foolish and hurtful.<sup>4</sup> He took pains

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<sup>4</sup>He says that it had produced "schisms and apostasies of entire Churches." Plainly, he does not mean what "schisms and apostasies" would mean in these days. There had been no withdrawal of Communion between these rural Churches and Alexandria—the whole course of the story makes that clear. But "partisan separations and perversions," the kind of thing that a sturdy British "Evangelical" would think of as having taken place, if he saw a group of towns going over to ritualistic High Churchmanship—such the great Dionysius was not too great to feel keenly.

to go and visit the part of the country where this opinion was still rife. He held public meetings and discussions. He wrote a book on the subject. He had the pleasure of winning a signal victory, and bringing all the leading teachers of the objectionable view over to his way of thinking. But Dionysius does not speak of them as having been in heresy. He speaks with affectionate respect of one Nepos, whose writings had been the chief reliance of these Millennarians, and who was now dead. "I hold him in the more reverence because he has gone to rest before us," is Dionysius' phrase. Evidently, he thinks of Nepos as one who had died in the communion of the Church and in the faith. Whichever party is in the majority, you see, and even when the majority has come to an utter triumph, neither opinion is elevated into a necessary dogma, neither opinion is denounced as heresy.

*B.—The Conviction of the First Three Centuries as to a Fixed Faith.*

The twentieth century mind, in Protestant circles, at any rate, has reacted from a universal rigidity to a universal fluidity in religious opinion. Sure of nothing, tolerant of everything, itself, it can remember all too well the time when men were sure of everything and tolerant of nothing. It finds it hard to conceive of any mental attitude between these two. I shall not scruple, therefore, to repeat over and over my ruling idea—"In the Church of the first three centuries something was fixed, and something was free, in religious thought—a little was majestically fixed, and everything else was gloriously free." I have illustrated at some length the freedom of opinion that then prevailed, and the mutual tolerance and intercommunion of men who vehemently differed in opinion. Now I must try to set before you



clearly that in the midst of this freedom and mutual toleration there was really something fixed, and definitely fixed, and held to be of supernatural authority. I press this last point, about the supernatural authority. Justin Martyr's opinion about the Millennium was something that was to him personally as clearly defined and as firmly fixed as the faith itself. He was just as sure that God had revealed this great fact of the future, as that God had delivered the one faith to the saints to keep. But Justin felt that God had given the faith authoritatively, as a trust, which the Church must hold for all God's people, and admit none as God's people unless they would accept it as an infallible guide. What God had said about the Millennium, God had left people free to misunderstand, if their minds moved that way. So I ask you to notice particularly whether my second and third century writers held something which they were not only sure of themselves, but regarded as binding upon the consciences of other men.

I am going to take first the witness of certain writers who lived about A. D. 200, and were sufficiently separated from one another to show difference of conviction about this matter, if differences of conviction existed in the Church of their day. The first that I shall name is Irenaeus, Bishop of Lugdunum in Southern Gaul, the city which we know to-day as Lyons, in France. His birth must be dated about A. D. 130, and his death soon after A. D. 200. Irenaeus is singularly interesting as a witness, because he was in his youth a personal pupil of St. Polycarp, the martyr Bishop of Smyrna, and he used to hear Polycarp talking in his old age about his personal intercourse, fifty years before, with the Apostle St. John. Nobody could have persuaded Irenaeus that the Apostles of our Lord taught as necessary beliefs anything which he had not been taught as Apostolic and

necessary by St. Polycarp. These, then, are the ideas of Irenaeus which he did receive from the pupil of St. John. "The truth proclaimed by the Church is immovable," he says, and then he goes on (*Adv. Haer.* I. x. 1, 2): "The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and their disciples this faith: In one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are in them, and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and His manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father 'to gather all things in one,' and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord and God and Saviour and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, 'every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess' to Him, and that He should execute just judgment toward all; that He may send 'spiritual wickednesses,' and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly and unrighteous and wicked and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous and holy and those who have kept His commandments and persevered in His love, some from the beginning, and others from their repentance,"<sup>5</sup> and surround them with everlasting glory."

2. "As I have already observed, the Church, having

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<sup>5</sup> Some from Baptism in infancy, and others from Baptism in adult years, seems to be the idea.

received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them and teaches them and hands them down with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world. But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men who are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth. Nor will anyone of the rulers in the Churches, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these (for no one is greater than the Master); nor, on the other hand, will he who is deficient in power of expression, inflict injury on the tradition. For the faith being one and the same, neither does one who is able at great length to discourse regarding it make any addition to it, nor does one who can say but little diminish it."

Irenaeus makes it abundantly clear that he held that the Church had a central and certain faith; that she had received it from our Lord through His Apostles; that it was preserved everywhere in the Church alike, and would always be so preserved; and that it possessed such authority that no Christian could ever depart from it, "for no one is greater than the Master," whose sure word it was well understood to be. But I must add that this

same Irenaeus, whose very name meant "Peace Maker," showed himself apt at reconciling men who differed and quarrelled, without asking them to agree in opinion. If he stands stoutly for a fixed faith, he stands for a free theology as well.<sup>6</sup>

We leave Gaul for North Africa, and take the testimony of the lawyer Tertullian, who became a Christian and a priest in the city of Carthage, and whose long life covered probably about the last half of the second century and the first quarter of the third century. He also recognized a clear difference between closed and open questions, and that the Church had both. I shall quote him first from a book in which he was writing about an open question, and (for once) arguing against the traditional usage of his own Church of Carthage. The book is "On the Veiling of Virgins"—we need not trouble ourselves as to what the discussion was about—and in its first chapter the eager writer, who had made himself known as an ardent traditionalist, had to show that an old custom might after all be a bad one. "Our Lord Christ declared of Himself, 'I am the truth,' and not 'I am the fashion,'" is one of his fine sayings. "Whatever savours of opposition to truth, this will be heresy, even if it be an ancient custom," is another, if we are careful to give "heresy" its ancient meaning of "self-will." But hear how this advocate of free inquiry and correction of whatever may need correcting goes on—"The rule of faith, indeed, is altogether one, alone, irremovable" [you will remember that word as used by Irenaeus] "and irreformable—the rule, to-wit, of believing in one only God omnipotent, the Creator of the Universe, and His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again the

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<sup>6</sup> Other noteworthy passages of Irenaeus are *Adv. Haer.* III. iii. 3; III. iv. 2; and V. xx. 1.

third day from the dead, received in the heavens, sitting now at the right hand of the Father, destined to come to judge quick and dead through the resurrection which includes the flesh." "This law of faith being constant," he adds (and I cannot forbear quoting him further), "the other succeeding points of doctrine and life admit the novelty of correction, the grace of God, to-wit, operating and advancing even to the end. For what kind of supposition is it, that while the devil is always operating and adding daily to the ingenuities of iniquity, the work of God should either have ceased, or else have desisted from advancing? Whereas the reason why the Lord sent the Paraclete was, that since human mediocrity was unable to take in all things at once, the work of education should little by little be directed and ordained and carried on to perfection by that Vicar of the Lord, the Holy Spirit."

"The rule of faith is altogether one, irremovable and irreformable." The man who penned that phrase wrote also a whole book, of which that might have been the motto—"On the Prescription of Heretics." To "prescribe" is "to write before." A physician's prescription is a direction written for you to follow before you get any sicker. The lawyer's prescription in Tertullian's day was a form of plea by which an advocate got the attention of the judge before the hearing of evidence began, and showed that his opponent had no standing in court at all, absolutely no right to be heard on the merits of the case. Such a plea, Tertullian said, was available as against the heretics of his day. The Church had an authoritative revelation of certain matters as necessary truths, given from the Divine Lord. The heretics would not submit themselves to that divine message. Then there was nothing more to be said. No argument of theirs was even to be considered. In chapter

VI. of the *De Prescriptione* Tertullian speaks of "heresy" as meaning originally "self-willed choice," and then he goes on thus: "We, however, are not permitted to cherish anything after our own will, nor yet to make choice of that which another has introduced of his private fancy. In the Lord's Apostles we possess our authority, for even they did not of themselves choose to introduce anything, but faithfully delivered to the nations the doctrine which they had received from Christ. If, therefore, even an angel from heaven should preach any other Gospel, he would be called accursed by us."

The heretics were always saying, "Seek, and ye shall find." Tertullian's answer is, "At the outset I lay down the proposition, that there is some one, and therefore definite, thing taught by Christ, which the Gentiles are by all means bound to believe, and for that purpose to seek, in order that, when they have found it, they may be able to believe." Later, he recognizes that a man may justly go on seeking knowledge outside the lines of the faith. But he is earnest that even for such enquiry men should not go among heretics. "No man receives illumination from a quarter where all is darkness. Let our seeking, therefore, be in that which is our own, and from those who are our own, and concerning that which is our own—that, and that only, which can become an object of enquiry without impairing the rule of faith." "Now with regard to this rule of faith," he goes on (XIV.), "that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend, it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; this Word was called His Son, and under the name of God, was seen in divers manners by the patriarchs, heard at all times by



the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the Kingdom of Heaven; worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose from the dead, the third day; having ascended into heaven, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh. This rule, as it will be proved, was taught by Christ." Tertullian adds in the next chapter: "So long as its form exists in its proper order, you may seek and discuss as much as you please, and give full rein to your curiosity, in whatever seems to you to hang in doubt, or to be shrouded in obscurity." Fixed faith and free theology once more! Another freedom will have been observed. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian feel perfectly free to state the one unchangeable faith in varying forms of words. It was not a set of phrases, but a body of ideas, that they were so much concerned to keep.

Let us pass to Alexandria with its great Catechetical School, where successive teachers labored to make Christianity acceptable to the scholarship of their time, and especially to its students of philosophy. Here, if anywhere, one might say, great leaders of thought would feel obliged to leave the door open for readjustment and change in even the most central Christian beliefs. But here, also, we find a quiet, steady insistence on a fixed faith by the brightest and boldest thinkers of the Christian philosophy.



Clement of Alexandria (about A. D. 200) speaks thus of his own Christian teachers: "These men, preserving the true tradition of the blessed doctrine directly from the holy Apostles, Peter and James and John and Paul, the son receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), have come even to us by the will of God, to deposit these ancestral and apostolic seeds" (Eusebius *Ecc. Hist.*, V. 11). It was Clement's office to revise the theologic thought of his time, to adapt it to the needs of the learned, to give it in some ways a new tone, and he cannot have been at all unconscious of that element in his work, yet he believed profoundly that his theology was a traditional theology, and not only that he did in fact agree in a central faith with those who went before him, but that he was bound to such agreement. There "are three conditions of the soul," he says in his book called *Stromata* (VII. 16, Ed., Potter, p. 894), "ignorance, opinion, knowledge. They in a state of ignorance are the heathen; they in a state of knowledge are the true Church; they in a condition of mere opinion are they that follow the heresies." He held that the Church had an infallible knowledge (of some things) coming from our Lord Himself. "We have the Lord as the source of our doctrine," is another phrase of the same chapter (Potter, p. 890). "The Church's rule," "the rule (*canon*) of the truth," "the Church's tradition," "the tradition of the Lord"—such phrases are often on his tongue. He says that after the fashion of the men who fell away and became beasts under Circe's poisoned draughts, the man who kicks at the Church's tradition and runs off into opinions devised by men's self-will (*δόξας αἰρέσεων ἀνθρωπίνων*) ceases to be a man of God at all (Potter, 890). He speaks of heretics as not having "the key of entrance, but a false, and (as the common phrase expresses it) counterfeit key, by which

they do not enter in, as we enter in, through the tradition of the Lord, drawing aside the veil, but tear down the side door of the Church, and dig through the wall by stealth, transgressing the truth, and being installed as high-priests of the mysteries of the wicked" (p. 897). He is as sure of the oneness of the Church and of the faith as Tertullian or Irenaeus could be. "In substance and idea, in origin, in pre-eminence, we say that the ancient and catholic Church is alone, collecting, as it does, into the unity of the one faith, . . . those already ordained, whom God predestinated, . . . But the pre-eminence of the Church, like the beginning of its constitution, is in unity, in this surpassing all things else, and having nothing like or equal to itself" (p. 899).

And so it is with Clement's greater successor, Origen, himself a bold theological innovator, perhaps the boldest in the first three Christian centuries. In the preface to his book on First Principles (*De Principiis*) he lays it down that "seeing there are many who think they hold the opinion of Christ, and yet some of these think differently from their predecessors, yet as the teaching of the Church is still preserved, as having been transmitted in orderly succession from the Apostles and remaining in the Churches to the present day, that alone is to be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition." He goes on to give a long paraphrase of the Creed, to show what points are included in this binding tradition. He mentions also from time to time subjects which are not included in this body of revealed truth, and which are open to the Christian student to speculate on as he may. But even in pointing out the open field of the Church's free theology, he makes it plain that he holds as steadfastly as any other traditionalist to the existence of a central

ground of faith, fenced round by boundaries which it is a matter of conscience to keep unmoved.

I am afraid that I have wearied you with much quotation, saying the same thing over and over. This painful monotonousness will have a real value, if it brands upon your memories the idea that in the last half of the second century and the beginning of the third, the Christian Church everywhere proclaimed that it had a central faith, unchangeable, authoritative, certain, and that outside of that faith it was the duty of Christian brethren to receive one another in the midst of many differences as Christ receives us all.

It has been the object of my first Lecture to establish that this idea, of an irreformable faith, handed down by tradition from Jesus Christ Himself, and so infallibly true, was a part of the Church's accepted history, and was even claimed to be a fact of the Church's consciousness, within 150 years after the death of our Lord.

Here the question arises, Did the Church get its history of very important matters entirely falsified during that one hundred and fifty years? Did the Church's consciousness first become so sophisticated that it grew into certain new opinions of its own, and then, secondly, ascribe those opinions to Jesus Christ as a Revealer, and then, thirdly, conceive the idea that Jesus Christ had imposed these views as a *necessary faith*, all without becoming conscious that it had had any change of mind at all, and all during that short space of one hundred and fifty years? And if we are to make that large supposition, the question will further arise, Did the Church in every part of the Roman Empire pass through these changes in closely parallel movements without becoming conscious of them, or did the changes come on so very rapidly that they had all taken

place before the Church began to spread from its first centre?

These are questions not to be answered off hand. The capacity of historians for writing history as they would like to believe it to have taken shape, is great. The capacity of the human mind, and even of groups of minds, for self-delusion is pitiful. In my next Lecture I must examine the question, Was the Age of Simple Reception of a Revealed Faith an age of self-delusion? I will simply say that a history in which all the makers of records (being of a fair number) agree as to all the important facts, is not lightly to be set aside. For myself, I do not believe that the whole Christian Church, the Church of all the Christian conquests of all the ages, is founded on a series of delusions. I plant myself with Irenaeus and Tertullian, with Clement and Origen, as a servant and maintainer of the delivered Faith.

## II.

The Claim that we Have a Fixed Faith, not Inconsistent with the True History of the Church's Beginnings.



## SYLLABUS OF LECTURE II.

The difference between finding a thing in history and knowing it by a personal tradition.

### I.

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CHURCH'S CONSCIOUSNESS.

The Bishops at Nicaea professed to know the faith because it had been handed down to them from the beginning through the line of their predecessors. That memory was true, or it was not. If it was *not* a true memory, the Church either (1) started *without* an authoritative "faith," and then created one, or (2) started out *with* such a "faith," and afterwards changed it. Insuperable objections to both of these hypotheses. Then the Nicene memory was true.

### II.

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CHURCH'S HISTORY.

The faith we found in A. D. 200, carried back through Justin and Ignatius to a time earlier than A. D. 100. Can this memory and this history be jointly false?

### III.

#### THE ATTEMPTS OF SOME MODERN SCHOLARS TO RE-WRITE THE STORY OF THE CHURCH'S BEGINNINGS.

A. An alleged consensus of scholars in favor of a new religion.

B. The real consensus of modern scholars, and the imaginary consensus.



- C. What is the new religion?
- D. What is the new scholarship?
- E. Some examples of a certain scholarship: Proofs which do not prove.

## IV.

SOME REASONS FOR NOT FOLLOWING THIS KIND OF  
SCHOLARSHIP.

- A. The failure of just such scholarship in the past: Baur and Strauss.
- B. This scholarship rests on unscientific assumptions.
- C. This scholarship is obliged to make out the Apostle St. Paul to be a deluded man, and a victim of the same sort of delusions with a group of uneducated Galileans.

## LECTURE II.

### THE CLAIM THAT WE HAVE A FIXED FAITH, NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH'S BEGINNINGS.

1 COR. XV. 1-3.—Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received:

GAL. I. 8, 9, 11, 12.—But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any Gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any Gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. . . For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the Gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.

I closed my Lecture of yesterday with a reference to a certain double testimony to the existence of a Revealed Faith. I said that we had the testimony of the Church's Historians, and the testimony of the Church's consciousness. Let me distinguish a little more clearly between these two. It is the office of the historian to

collect facts and set them down, and to some extent to comment on them. He gathers his facts in various ways, from living witnesses, from monuments of the past, from former historians, from records of divers kinds. He is engaged in taking the testimony of the past, and if he finds a well authenticated fact, he puts it down, although no man living could profess to have any memory of such a thing. For instance, Eusebius gives us lists of the successive Bishops of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Alexandria, of Rome. Nobody at Rome would know the list of the Bishops of Jerusalem without looking for it in some book, and in like manner nobody at Alexandria would carry in his memory the whole line of the Bishops of Rome. That kind of fact we get by historical testimony, and by no other. Again, the alleged fact that our Lord Jesus Christ delivered to His Apostles as trustees for the whole Church a faith, to be received and believed and taught, and to be transmitted through the ages unfailingly as a matter of divine authority—that alleged fact is one that historical writers, like Tertullian and Clement, state, as they do other historical facts, on what they held to be reasonable historical testimony. But I must insist that that Church of Tertullian and Clement claimed to have another kind of testimony to this particular fact. The Church claimed that she had an unbroken consciousness of this fact, or in simpler words, that she had never forgotten it. I must ask your attention first, this afternoon, to the Church's claim that she remembered a revealed faith.

#### I.—THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CHURCH'S CONSCIOUSNESS.

To put the argument in the most striking way, I must ask you to turn forward in your minds to the

year of our Lord 325, and to the assembling of the first General Council at Nicaea. At that time, and for one hundred and fifty years previously—so, I think, all historical students will now acknowledge—the Church throughout Christendom had held two things: that it had a fixed, authoritative faith given by Jesus Christ; and that its Bishops were in an especial manner guardians and trustees of that faith, in fact, special memory-organs, having it for one of their chief businesses to keep that faith from any manner of adulteration. At Nicaea, then, such Bishops assembled, over three hundred of them, from nearly all parts of the Roman Empire and even from beyond its borders. They are called together, it must be remembered, not to decide what the faith would better be for the next generation or so, as in a modern “Council of the Vatican,” but to give their testimony as to what the faith really is, to examine whether certain teachings complained of really transgress the necessary limits of that faith, and to devise, if need be, a form of expression of the ancient faith, which shall make it clear to honest men where a popular error does actually antagonize the revealed rule. As a matter of fact, when those men came together, in great eagerness to save the one faith from violation, and in great jealousy as to the matter of its preservation, they found themselves absolutely agreed in their memory of what had been given them to keep.

Now that seems to me a very striking phenomenon. Simply as a phenomenon of the early part of the fourth century, the philosopher must account for it, this unanimous agreement of men living in far separated regions, with difficult conditions of travel, with scanty intercourse between the ends of the world (even of the little world then known), with few books and but few laborious copies of the same. How is it that these men

did not fall apart in their ideas of what was necessary belief, either adding to, or taking away from, or somehow changing, "the deposit of the faith"? Well, I am not going to try to say how they were kept in agreement, but I am going to claim that the *unanimity* of their memory goes far to prove the *truth* of their memory. And this is the line of proof.

Our philosopher, endeavoring to reconstruct the history of the Catholic Church, so as to account for this phenomenon of unanimous testimony, must start with one of three hypotheses. No other is possible. For first, either the Church did start out with an idea that it had a group of beliefs which constituted a fixed, infallible faith, or it did not begin with that idea. Let us take for our first supposition this—that (1) the Church did *not* begin with such a group of beliefs in its consciousness. Then the other supposition—that the Church *did* start with such a body of beliefs, must, of necessity, branch out into two suppositions more. For, if it did so begin, either (2) the Church changed that group of beliefs in some way, or else (3) it did not change them, but held them safely and steadfastly, until its Bishops, its "memory-organs," as I have called them, delivered their testimony at Nicaea. Let us examine these hypotheses and see what they will lead to.

(1) Take first the supposition that the Church began without any idea that it had any necessary beliefs. It was planted, we will suppose, in such a condition of freedom, in all parts of the Roman Empire, and even beyond the limits of the Roman Empire, in the Far East. Then differences of opinion arose—all those multitudinous forms of religious thought which came to be called "heresies" later. Then there arose also the dogmatizing habit and the bad temper of irritable sensitiveness about religious difference. All that is

easily imaginable. It is what must have happened, if the different portions of the Catholic Church started out without an authoritative "faith." Then we will suppose that in every portion of the Catholic Church the majority erected their favorite views into dogmas, and refused to fellowship with the minority, and by excommunication forced them out and compelled them to organize themselves in rival Churches under other names. That is all very easily imaginable too. Let me add one thing which is not merely imaginable, but absolutely inevitable. While men were thus forming their favorite religious ideas into ironclad creeds here and there, no two sections of the Church would have made precisely the same list. What men cared most about in North Africa would not have been what men cared most about in Greece. The prepossessions of Egypt would not have led to just the same result as the prepossessions of Asia Minor. The things which the majority of Christians cared passionately for in Gaul and Spain would not have been those that drew out the dogmatic ardor of the Christians in the valley of the Euphrates. If every part of the Catholic Church had made its own Creed, independent of every other part, we should most certainly have found that the majority of one section was the oppressed minority of another section, and that rival Churches, each claiming to be Catholic, would have been found hurling denunciations at one another from opposite corners of the world.<sup>7</sup> It

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<sup>7</sup> One may draw an apt illustration of this fact of human nature from the history of the Church in the sixth and seventh centuries. The Churches of Spain thought good to enlarge their Creed, the one which we call "Nicene," by adding to the words "who proceedeth from the Father," in the Article concerning the Holy Ghost, the further phrase "and the Son." It had always read, "who proceedeth from the Father." Now they would make it read, "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son"—"*ex Patre Filioque.*" It is quite certain that they regarded themselves as



will not do to suggest that the early converts to the religion of Jesus Christ were men of stagnant minds, so that they did not begin to wake up and think, until the first three Christian centuries were over. That suggestion would be too absurd. Not only was there a riot of religious guesswork going on all around those Christians of the first three centuries, but the roll of Christian writers and the contents of their books show that in all parts of the Christian world the Christian mind was actively at work. You will recall, for example, that the natural diversity that St. Paul found in Corinth was just as great as ours is now, and that the spirit of partisanship was at least sufficiently in evidence. No! I venture to make this assertion, and challenge contradiction to it: In that age, with its limited circulation of books and its restricted intercourse between remote neighborhoods, if the different sections of the Catholic Church had been left free to make creeds each one for itself, it is impossible that they should all have decided all their graver questions alike, and even more utterly impossible that they should have framed the same list of things to be regarded as *essential*. Some men everywhere might have formed precisely these opinions, and made just this same list of essential things. But everywhere the minority would have com-

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advancing no new doctrine. They simply thought that if the Son of God was co-eternal and consubstantial with His Father, the Procession of the Holy Spirit, which was from the Father, must be from the Son also. This revised form of the Creed became popular in Gaul as well as Spain. In something over a century it reached the court of Charlemagne, and was welcomed by him. About that time it began to be heard of in the East, and there a fury of opposition rose up against it. Confessedly, no Church had a right to introduce new doctrine into the Creed. The Eastern theologians insisted that this Double Procession was new doctrine, and they even denounced it as false doctrine. The Roman Bishop unhappily gave way to the Emperor's insistence, and adopted the version of the Creed with the "Filioque" clause. East and West, after a time, fell out of Communion with one another, and the breach has not been healed to this day.



plained bitterly that they were being asked to believe something which had not been asked of them before, and that the idea of a Catholic Church, a church adapted to go everywhere and meet all needs, was being adulterated. The triumphant Church of one section would have found its fellowship with the excluded heretics of another section. The Bishops who held successfully the sees of one portion of the Church would have been found at Nicaea to be out of touch with those whose faction had prevailed in another portion of the Church, and the Church History of the first three centuries would have been a different thing from what it is.

(2) But let us examine the second supposition,—that the Church *did* begin with a central faith in its consciousness, before the first preachers of the new religion had had time to form separated groups of any independence of thought, but that this body of ideas was somehow changed in transmission. This supposition will be found even more unworkable (if such a thing can be conceived) than the former one. If the Church began to change its faith in the working out of its experience, it is certain again that in different parts of the world different pressures would have been felt, and therefore different changes made. In addition to the difficulties of the former supposition, there would have been on this hypothesis a constant jealousy on the part of the conservative, who were attached to the faith as they had received it, and would be able to raise a cry that what had been given them in trust was being changed. Such a series of revolutions could never have gone on in the Church, even though they should have occurred simultaneously, and left no trace in history. As a matter of fact, the history shows no trace of anything of the kind.

(3) Out of three conceivable hypotheses, two are found quite unable to sustain the load of the existing facts. There remains only the third. The Church which could agree in the confession of an authoritative faith at Nicaea did start on its way with such a faith at the beginning, and did remember it correctly. A traditional memory, descending through a line of officeholders, is ordinarily, no doubt, a very weak and changeful thing. All the more, for that very reason, the unanimous agreement of three hundred such traditional memories, after at least two hundred and fifty years, is a very remarkable phenomenon. It may be said, indeed, that these are not three hundred independent memories. The Bishops of Palestine represented but one tradition after all. The Bishops of a single country would unconsciously affect one another's minds, and pass through the same atmospheric changes of thought. That is true, and yet any single Bishop might conceivably be a jealous conservative, and rise up in protest against changes which his brethren were making unconsciously. And at least, the Churches of the different *countries* represented separate memories. Spain and Gaul and Italy and Greece; Asia Minor, Syria, and the Farther East; Egypt and Africa—agreement in memory of all these witnesses together means truth of memory. Nothing but truth will account for the agreement. Any other supposition must run clean contrary not only to the Church's memory, but to the unchanging facts of weak human nature as well.

## II.—THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CHURCH'S WRITTEN HISTORY.

From the testimony of the Church's memory I turn again to that of the Church's history. Certainly at the

time of the Council of Nicaea the whole Catholic Church held to the group of beliefs contained in what we call the Catholic Creeds, as a necessary faith given by revelation. The evidence of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and the great men of the Alexandrian School shows sufficiently that the same thing was held throughout the Church as far back as A. D. 175. Further, the testimony of Irenaeus carries with it, at least at second hand, that of Polycarp, who had listened to the teaching of St. John. Let us now follow our line of historical testimonies somewhat further.

Justin Martyr was in the height of his activity about A. D. 150. He must have learned his ideas of what was essential Christianity as early as A. D. 125. What is his testimony? In an interesting little book by Dr. McGiffert of the Union Theological Seminary, one of our ablest American scholars, on "The Old Roman Symbol," that is, the form of Creed used by the Church of the city of Rome in the latter half of the second century, I observe this statement,—“Justin nowhere in his extant works testifies to the existence of any creed or symbol” (p. 69). Indeed, Dr. McGiffert holds that the absence of any reference to a creed in Justin’s account of Christian baptism in his First Apology, coupled with a like silence in that curious book, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, shows that up to Justin’s time no formulated creed was yet taught to Christian converts (p. 9). That *may* be a just inference from the somewhat slight evidence we have. I do not feel sure about the matter either way. But whether the Church had yet begun to use *creed-forms*, in fixed phrases for people to learn by heart, is a small matter. Justin Martyr is perfectly clear that Christians had a necessary *faith*. In my first Lecture I quoted Justin’s emphatic statement that he follows not “men or men’s

doctrines, but God and the doctrines delivered by Him," and again that if one meets with persons called Christians "who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven," they are not to be imagined to be Christians. In one of Tertullian's books I find the phrase, "that which being believed makes men to be Christians" (*De Res. Carnis* 2). Justin evidently had the same idea. There was something, he nowhere tells us in one sentence what it includes, which when believed made men to be Christians. That was what he had been taught at Ephesus by men who learned their Christianity from St. John.

Justin is of particular interest as a witness to the early Christian tradition, because he had lived a wandering life. He was born in Palestine, studied philosophy and Christian teaching as well at Ephesus, wrote his books at Rome. He represents the Christian tradition of both Asia Minor and Italy as to "what makes men Christians." I will mention one more writer outside of the volume of Holy Scripture, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was probably born within twenty years after our Lord's death, and who wrote his letters just before his martyrdom, not far from the year of our Lord 115. Certainly he learned his ideas of what was necessary in the Christian religion within the limits of the first Christian century. He too writes out no form of creed, but he is perfectly sure that some things are necessary beliefs in the Christian body. He speaks to the Ephesian Church of their coming together "in one faith" (Eph. xx.), and to the Church of Smyrna he says, "I glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom. For I have observed that ye are perfected in an immovable faith, being fully persuaded with respect to our Lord that He was truly of the seed

of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God, according to the will and power of God; that He was truly born of a Virgin, was baptized by John, in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him, and was truly, under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch, nailed to the cross for us in His flesh" (*Smyrn.* i.). To the Magnesians he writes of wishing to guard them, "that ye fall not upon the hooks of vain doctrine, but that ye attain to full assurance in regard to the birth and passion and resurrection which took place in the time of the government of Pontius Pilate, being truly and certainly accomplished by Jesus Christ, who is our hope" (*Magnes.* xi.). To the Church at Tralles he says, "Stop your ears, brethren, when anyone speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended from David and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and did eat and drink; He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and truly died, in the sight of beings in heaven and on earth and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life. Flee, therefore, those evil off-shoots which produce death-bearing fruit, whereof if any one tastes, forthwith he dies" (*Trall.* ix., xi.). Here is the same certainty of the same things, and the same assurance that not to believe them is to be cut off from supernatural grace, representing lessons learned by Ignatius back within the first Christian century, or to put it in another way, within the lifetime of the Apostle St. John.

One step more brings us within the pages of the New Testament itself. I will not venture to assume that the Letters ascribed to St. John and St. Jude were

really written by those Apostles, or have any divine authority over our minds, but I will simply point to the fact that they are products of *some* writers of the first Christian century, reflecting its thought; and note further (1) that the Letters ascribed to St. John make the Christian life itself to depend in some measure upon a necessary faith, "Everyone that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (1 John v. 1), and order Christians not to give hospitality and help as Christians to any who do not hold a certain particular belief, "If anyone come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (II. John x.), and (2) that the Letter ascribed to St. Jude declares it to be a duty to contend earnestly for "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Whoever may have written these words. I think that we may feel sure that they were written before the last of the original Apostles had passed away.<sup>8</sup> So long is the chain of historical testimonies to the effect that the Church of Jesus Christ had an authoritative faith delivered to it from a superhuman source. I leave for later consideration the testimony of St. Paul in such writings as nearly all scholars hold to be certainly his. One may safely follow the Church's history so far as this: it makes it clear that the Church emerged from the obscurity of the first Christian century under the impression that it had a central faith, authoritative, certain, supernaturally bestowed.

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<sup>8</sup> It is claimed by some that the Epistle of Jude must be dated as late as the first quarter of the second century. But at any rate the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, though fiercely assailed as "un-Pauline," that is, as not agreeing with certain modern representations of St. Paul's teaching, seem to have been known to Ignatius and Polycarp (see Dr. McGiffert in his *Apostolic Age*, p. 413). In that case the idea of Titus iii. 10—that a "heretic" is to be "rejected," and is to be regarded as a sinner, "self-condemned"—was being circulated as St. Paul's as early as the first years of the second century.



### III.—THE ATTEMPTS OF SOME MODERN SCHOLARS TO RE-WRITE THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH'S BEGINNINGS.

But it will be said by many earnest and able thinkers of to-day that all this history rests upon a delusion after all. Doubtless the Church had by the end of the first century begun to think that it had such a faith to defend. Doubtless some of the New Testament books, as they now stand, show signs of the working of that idea. But certain modern students profess to be able to take the New Testament writings to pieces, and show precisely what portions of them correspond to what they consider the genuine "religion of Jesus," and what portions of them again correspond to the (very different) "religion of Paul," and what portions represent a still greater departure from, and corruption of, original Christianity. Just suppose for a moment that a lawyer should come into court and say, "Your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury, this is a very important case, and also a very intricate case, and I am bound to tell you that the only way to get at the real facts will be to convict all the principal witnesses of perjury"! I honestly think that in a court of law such an advocate would prejudice his case, and probably lose it. But perhaps I am behind the times. At any rate, one thing is certain. Our American people value truth. They honor scholarship. They almost worship science. If any man can convince them that "scholars" are agreed that a certain traditional representation of Christianity is a flimsy counterfeit, an unhistorical misrepresentation of the religion of the Founder of Christianity, then they will have none of that traditional representation. They may, or they may not, accept as a religion worth having the religion which these



"scholars" offer in their turn, in the name of the Teacher from Nazareth. They will never tolerate any religion professing to come from Him, which by the consent of modern scholarship is branded as a forgery and a fraud.

*A.—An Alleged Consensus of Scholars in Favor of a New Religion.*

Is there such a consent of scholarship against the tradition of the Catholic Church? Certain writers assure us gravely that there is. I had before me, as I wrote these lines, the advertisement of a series of little books on "Modern Religious Problems." "The aim of this series of books," it says, "is to lay before the great body of intelligent people in the English-speaking world the precise results of modern scholarship." The advertisement goes on to say that within the last few years, "it is possible to speak of a consensus of opinion among the leading scholars of England and America, who have in general adopted the modern point of view." "Who have in general adopted the modern point of view" is not quite so definite a phrase as "the precise results of modern scholarship," I observe; and I observe further that we are not told what this consensus includes, nor even what this modern point of view is. It seems to me that in the mind of my friend who wrote that announcement there is a confusion between a real consensus of modern scholarship and what I shall venture to call "an imaginary consensus." I must try to give you some notion of what I mean by each of these phrases.

*B.—The Real Consensus of Modern Scholars, and the Imaginary Consensus.*

1. Take first the real consensus. We all believe in "Evolution." There are very deep differences among

deeply scientific men as to what they hold under that name: but there is enough in which they agree to make the intellectual atmosphere of to-day that of a different Age from the Age in which our grandfathers lived. If any person calling himself a scholar should tell me that he did not believe in "Evolution," I should be obliged to think of him as a negligible quantity in scholarship. Or again, to come nearer to our present subject, the true story of the beginnings of the Christian Religion, I should say that the study of Textual Criticism has brought about a real consensus of scholars to the effect that certain verses of what we have received as the New Testament do not belong there, being no part of the New Testament as the Church originally received it. A leading example of such really scientific correction of a false tradition is in the case of the passage, "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," in the First Epistle of St. John. Similarly, it may be called a matter of consensus that the passage about the woman taken in adultery was not originally a part of the Fourth Gospel. Again, I should call it a matter of consensus that those twelve verses which we now find printed at the end of the Gospel according to St. Mark were not really written by that Evangelist, the original ending of his Gospel having been somehow lost, or the Gospel left unfinished at the writer's death. And again, in a still different line, I think that it may be said to be a matter of consensus among men of a really broad scholarship that the Bible is not a volume which Almighty God has cared to preserve from every possibility of mistake about things. And while the ancient faith, which I believe to be God-given, tells us that the Holy Ghost "spake by the prophets," and so that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God to us for certain great purposes, I gladly acknowl-

edge that it is not a part of the ancient faith that that "Word" cannot be spoken without being mixed up with human mistakes as to minor matters which have nothing to do with religious truth.

2. But on the other hand, I utterly deny that there is a consensus of modern scholars to the effect that the Fourth Gospel was written in the second century by a man who never knew our Lord in His earthly life. I deny that there is any consensus of modern scholarship to the effect (1) that miracles are impossible, or (2) that our Lord never thought of Himself as Divine in a unique sense, or (3) that our Lord founded no church organization, or (4) that the Gospels and the Acts are histories "idealized," that is to say, deliberately falsified. Catholic scholars do not grant any of these suppositions. Protestant scholars very generally (and increasingly) do grant them. But these two groups of scholars do not agree. In England and America, at any rate, and yes! even in Germany, there are still "leading scholars" who believe fully the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, and accept the four Gospels and the Acts as good history. But writers such as I am quoting do not count as scholars, apparently, any persons who do not agree with them. By that easy process they make out a tremendously strong case. In fact, these little books of which I was speaking a moment ago are going to "put the assured results of religious scholarship within reach of all."

If most of the scholars in Germany and some in America should have the measles simultaneously, they would not announce that having the measles was a result ("precise" or otherwise) of modern scholarship. But a great company of scholars, having been seized with what seems to me a disease of rationalistic thinking and feeling—the feeling predominates, I think—do

announce as a "result of scholarship" a series of notions which are really an intellectual fashion, a *cause* shaping their scholarship to particular ends, in fact a mould into which their scholarly activities are carefully poured. As a matter of fact, men do not disbelieve in the Deity of Jesus Christ, or in His miracles, because scholarship compels them to such disbelief, but, disbelieving, naturally employ their resources as scholars to make out as good a case as they can. And speaking of "assured results of religious scholarship," I want to quote a crisp sentence of Sir William Ramsay of the University of Aberdeen in his *Luke the Physician* (p. 3). "The question 'Shall we hear evidence or not?' presents itself at the threshold of every investigation into the New Testament. Modern criticism for a time entered on its task with a decided negative. Its mind was made up, and it would not listen to evidence on a matter that was already decided."

He quotes Dr. Harnack himself as saying, "All faults that have been committed in New Testament criticism are gathered as it were to a focus in the criticism of the Acts of the Apostles." This is weighty testimony to the existence of faults of method in modern scholarship, from which not all are yet clear.

### *C.—What is the New Religion?*

What, then, is this newly discovered religion? And by what sort of scholarship is it supported, that it should speak with authority? As to the new religion itself, I think that the very first article of its creed is, "I believe that there can be no such thing as a supernatural power." It is proverbially hard to prove a negative. It might seem to be a good deal of an undertaking to prove such a sweeping negative as that. For modern scholars, of a certain class, it is quite easy. We have all

learned to believe in "Evolution." I profess that belief joyfully and ardently myself. But since we have learned that a great many things in the world's history which we used to regard as supernatural, like the creation of particular species of animals, are quite natural, what follows? "It follows," say certain modern scholars, "that we cannot reasonably believe that there are any supernatural occurrences at all." It is a great leap from "Some things once thought supernatural are now found natural," to "Nothing is supernatural at all." It does not commend itself to me as a necessary conclusion, a conclusion which a man must reach, or show that he has an unscholarly mind. But I must hasten on. The new religion teaches that our Lord was certainly not God. He was simply divine, as all men are divine, because of His own likeness to God. He had no eternal pre-existence. He was not born of a Virgin. He never said that the Son of Man was come "to give His life a ransom for many." That is an invention of some follower in after years. He did not expect to die a martyr, and if He had foreseen His death, He would have thought of it as a failure, and not as an atoning sacrifice. After His death He did not raise His body from the tomb. His disciples, or some of them, did think that they saw Him. It was either a sheer fancy of excited imagination, or perhaps a Spirit of extraordinary power did succeed in impressing human minds with an idea of His presence with them so powerful that it convinced them of His life since death, and then they could not express their own experience without materializing it. He never told His Apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. He never said anything of baptizing "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The idea that our Lord's death was an atonement, and the idea that He was a super-



natural being, were both developments reached gradually. This new religion, then, which is described as an assured result of scholarship, is a somewhat radical Unitarianism. I do not mean to be guilty of the vulgarity of calling names instead of arguing, but accuracy in nomenclature is one of the grave duties of scholarship, and accurate naming of the new discovery will really help to make it more clear that there are scholars worthy of the name who still hold out unshaken. It is really ridiculous for any one to speak of scholars as agreed in a result which is not only refused, but scorned, by a host of German scholars, with Theodore Zahn at their head, a man recognized by friend and foe as having just such monumental learning as Harnack; and a host of French scholars, Roman Catholics, but still open-minded scholars, represented, for example, by Mgr. Duchesne; and a host of Englishmen, for whom so honorable and honored a scholar as Dr. Sanday may be spokesman. We have on the side of the Nicene Faith a great army of scholars having both the scholar's possessions and the scholar's quality. To imply the contrary is to be less careful than an honest gentleman should be. But having mentioned the scholar's quality, I must here make a digression to point out what the quality of a scholar really is.

*D.—What is the New Scholarship?*

For it seems to me quite clear that the office of the scholar in every branch of science is two-fold. It is the scholar's business to *collect* facts and to *interpret* facts. If besides collecting facts laboriously, arranging them naturally, and interpreting them clearly (natural arrangement is, of course, a part of just interpretation)—if besides these good works, he can also present his results powerfully, so much the better. By so much

he is the greater man, and the greater force. But his measure as a scholar depends on his power to do those two things: gather facts largely, interpret them faithfully and truly. It sometimes happens that these two qualities are separated. It may be that a student of history—the science with which we are just now concerned—may by indolence, or impatience, or just by lack of opportunity, be prevented from being a great gatherer of facts, and yet through a certain gift of penetrating intuition, founded on a vivid and just imagination, and a deep insight into human nature, the common material out of which all history is made, such a man may be an exceptionally illuminating interpreter of other men's gathered stores. It is quite possible, on the other hand—I think, it happens often—that a man may be a most useful gatherer of facts, accumulating them like a miser's coins, and yet have very little judgment as to what conclusions may reasonably be gathered out of them. The great accumulator of facts will generally get more reputation as a great scholar than the wise interpreter, but it is the wise interpreter who does most to help the world along. With all respect for a great nation and for a remarkable body of men, I feel bound to say that to me German scholarship seems to be, as a general rule, far more gifted in accumulation than in interpretation.

Let me here illustrate what I mean. If a child dropped a picture-puzzle in a hay-loft, and the family could get back only 139 pieces out of 216, and if then a learned gentleman with spectacles came along, and picked out 61 pieces more, it would be immensely creditable to his gifts as a searcher, but would it justify him in posing as the only man in the neighborhood who could put that picture together right? One old aunt, who was not intellectual, but happened to remember



just how it used to go, would be a far safer guide than the learned professor, especially if the professor should insist that the original maker of the puzzle could not possibly have put certain colors side by side in a way to jar upon the professor's own taste, and so should refuse to admit some of the most obvious combinations as any way possible. Many eminent German scholars, and some English and American scholars, following them, seem to me to be guilty of just that unscientific subjectivity. They approach the study of our Lord and of His Church, and of the New Testament writings, which are the chief witnesses in the case, with certain prepossessions. There can be no such thing as miracle, no such thing as revelation, no supernatural Incarnation of an eternal Divine Person in man's nature, no resurrection of a dead body to newness of life. All these ideas, such scholars hold, are impossible and silly. But the witnesses testify to all these ideas as facts. Then all the testimony must be explained away. The history, as it stands in the New Testament books, is quite impossible, they say. Then the real history must be reconstructed, and the appearance of what seems to them false history, and its acceptance (to the complete suppression of the true) must somehow be accounted for. How shall it be done? The process is, in brief, to pick out all the facts that one likes, to build up an imaginary history from them by a series of guesses more or less brilliant, and then to crown the work by changing, in every sentence, "*It might* have been thus and so" to "*It must* have been thus and so." And yet pure guesswork is not scientific history.

*E.—Some Examples of the New Scholarship: Proofs which do not Prove.*

I must now give some examples to illustrate this

distinction between guesswork and scientific historical procedure. (1) My friends of the modern radical type do many things well. They discover, for example—all scholars in that subject discover—that some ancient MSS. of the Gospel according to St. Luke omit in xxii. 19, 20, all the words recording the consecration of the Cup. It is true that the evidence for omitting these words is wholly “Western,” and modern scholarship generally regards “Western” readings with suspicion. But the omission of such words from a genuine Text would be so difficult, and the insertion of them by a scribe whose mind was full of St. Paul’s account of the Institution in 1 Cor. xi. would be so easy, that it makes a very strong case for thinking that the author of that Gospel did not write those words. Then if a student wishes to make out a theory that our Lord instituted for His disciples a Love-feast in which the eating of bread together represented brotherhood, but blessed no wine, and said nothing of blood shed for the remission of sins, our student has a right to claim that St. Luke says nothing of any consecration of a cup with sacrificial words. It is by no means a settled conclusion. But it is at least a conclusion founded on a scientific method, and that method so far reasonably applied. I do not blame any man who says positively that those words are not St. Luke’s, though I could not myself speak positively. But on the other hand, when a man says that the corresponding passage in St. Mark (xiv. 24) “has its roots in the Pauline theology, and is put into the mouth of Jesus by Mark, the follower of Paul” (Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, II. 75), and “it follows” from this that our Lord had no idea of approaching death when He blessed and distributed the bread, I feel that this is not only pure guesswork, but guesswork which is allowed to override facts. Starting

from the fact, if fact it be, that certain words are not in the Gospel of St. Luke, this argument requires us to assume that two other witnesses, the writers of the Gospels called now after St. Matthew and St. Mark, are simply false witnesses.

(2) And so again, "The baptismal formula—'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'—would be simply unthinkable in the mouth of Jesus" (Pfleiderer, II. 376). The alleged scientific foundation for this statement is that we find no one quoting that formula till the time of Justin Martyr, and that in the Acts we read always of baptism "in the Name of Jesus" simply. I deal with the second difficulty first, and remark that a truly scientific method would observe that there are just four of these passages where baptism in or into a name is mentioned, and in these four passages two different forms are used. Evidently this is not the quoting of a formula. In Acts ii. 38 and x. 48,<sup>9</sup> we find St. Peter ordering people to be baptized "*in* the Name of Jesus Christ," that is, as His followers. In both cases they were persons as yet uninstructed. In Acts viii. 16, xix. 5, we find certain persons actually baptized "*into* the Name of the Lord Jesus," that is, into union with His Being. There is nothing to suggest the form of words used at the Baptism, in either case. But scholars now agree pretty generally—both conservatives and radicals do come together in this—that St. Paul was a Trinitarian believer. His benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all," shows that he would have regarded baptism into the Name, that is, into the Being, of Jesus

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<sup>9</sup> The Westcott and Hort text is here followed. The *Textus Receptus* gives a further variation, "in the Name of the Lord," in x. 48.

Christ, as carrying with it an incorporation into the Name, that is into the Being, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. I do not complain of a man if he says, "I cannot believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, and therefore I cannot believe that Jesus ever ordered His disciples to baptize with a Trinitarian formula." That would not be a highly scientific argument, but it would be inevitable for the man that felt that way. I do complain sharply of the man who claims that because of those four passages in the Acts, no one of which professes to give a baptismal formula, therefore it is impossible to suppose that our Lord ever said what the Gospel called St. Matthew's says that He said, that Gospel being itself a piece of historical testimony, for which there is much to be said, certainly, on scientific historical grounds. The argument of which I am here complaining is not merely non-scientific. It is un-scientific. But returning now to the first objection, that the Trinitarian formula is not found quoted before the time of Justin Martyr, I simply remark that it is. That curious book, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, contains a direction not to give the Eucharist to any but those who have been "baptized in the Name of the Lord." According to the argument which I have been examining, that would mean that the writer of the *Teaching* was in the habit of hearing the form "I baptize thee in the Name of the Lord Jesus." Well, it happens that he has given directions about Baptism two chapters earlier in his book, which is probably of the early second century or still earlier, by the way, and he directs most particularly that the minister of baptism is to baptize "*Into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to Sir William Ramsay ("*Luke, the Physician,*" p. 5) for a charming example of the consensus of scholars.

(3) One more example I must give. The very central point of the new religion and the new history is in their dealing with the Resurrection of our Lord. That is anathema to these modern critics. If that story be allowed to stand, their whole system falls in ruins. They assail it, of course, with angry vehemence, but is there not more eagerness than science in their method? Let us see. First, they say that the existing Gospel narratives are hopelessly inconsistent one with another, and even within themselves. The Gospel writers tell of a direction given from our Lord to His disciples to go to Galilee. "There shall they see Me." Then our Lord is said to have appeared, first to certain disciples, and then to all the Apostles in Jerusalem, on two successive Sundays, before they go to Galilee at all. Now a great many scholars find no insuperable difficulty here. If half the ingenuity had been spent on showing, by pure guess, how these stories may be made to hang together, which has been spent in showing, by pure guess, that the true history was quite other, I think that our critics might have scored a brilliant success. I speak of "pure guess." There is an apocryphal Gospel called "the Gospel of Peter," supposed by Harnack to date from the first quarter of the second century, which ascribes no appearance of our Lord to the first eight days after the Resurrection (except a very extraordinary one to the Roman soldiers!), and represents the disciples as going to Galilee without having seen the Lord at all. The critics "guess," then—it seems to me

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Dr. McGiffert pours scorn on the idea that "Luke, the companion of Paul," can have been the author of the Third Gospel and the Acts, on the ground that such a man *could not* have got his history seriously wrong. Dr. Harnack proves with a weighty argument that this Luke did write those books. But the consensus remains unbroken. Both Dr. McGiffert and Dr. Harnack are sure that the history is very inaccurate anyhow! Which is the really important point from the Rationalist point of view.

very nearly a "pure guess"—that this quaint apocryphal piece preserves the original tradition. There were no appearances in Jerusalem. Only the disciples went back to Galilee, and then they began to imagine that they saw things. All this is pure conjecture after all. Is history really compelled to such conjectures by a scientific method? I think not.

#### IV.—SOME REASONS FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE NEW SCHOLARSHIP.

##### *A.—The Failure of Just Such Scholarship in the Past.*

On the other hand, there are really some scientific objections to this reconstruction of the Church's history. Before I state them, however, I want to introduce a piece of history from the nineteenth century—something which I have seen with my eyes. It has a bearing on the question whether certain imported scholarship, on which a tremendous duty has to be paid, is really of scientific value. Let me read you certain words from an account of a great foreign scholar, now dead. "His whole life was consecrated to religious studies—the history of doctrines, the symbolism<sup>11</sup>—of the church, and biblical exegesis. On account of the universality of his culture, the wonderful activity and fertility of his mind, his rare combination of speculative thought with solid knowledge, and that faculty of historic divination or insight which enables him to draw decisive results from separate, obscure, and neglected data—he has been regarded by many in Germany as the most massive theological intellect since Schleiermacher" (Article "Baur" in *International Cyclopaedia*). That

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<sup>11</sup> Some readers may need to be informed that "Symbolism," in German, "Symbolik," derived from Latin "Symbolum," "a Creed," is a favorite word in Germany for the study of creeds.



man at any rate, you may think, is above this Lecturer's criticism. Well, I need not criticise him. Critical scholarship itself has done that. For that was Ferdinand Christian Baur, founder, with David Friedrich Strauss, of the so-called "Tübingen School" of theological criticism. Baur's great contribution to the cause was his reconstruction of the story of Acts, making it an extremely unhistorical forgery of the second century, intended to bring about a reconciliation between the followers of St. Peter and those of St. Paul, these two apostles being made out to have championed practically different religions in their lifetimes. Strauss, his brilliant colleague, produced a *Life of Jesus*, representing our Lord as part enthusiast and part impostor, which, among its many triumphs, made conquest of the mind of Miss Marian Evans, better known to us as "George Eliot." Indeed, she was the translator of the *Leben Jesu* into English. These two men, Baur and Strauss, were the idols of German Rationalism, when I was a boy. Scholarship was theirs. Thought was theirs. With a certain class of students it was scientific heresy to fault them. Where are their reconstructions of history now? Gone! Utterly discredited.

"They fly forgotten, as a dream  
Dies at the opening day."

England's greatest woman novelist fell a victim to a romance, and gave up her religious faith before a work of fiction, which her own bappier inventions will long outlive. German scholarship still insists on reconstructing fundamentally the story of the life of our Lord and the story of the beginnings of the Christian Church. But it will no longer attempt such reconstruction on the lines of Strauss and Baur. Their work has gone already to the dust-heap.

But it may be said by some that though the methods of fifty years ago are discarded, the results remain. That is, scholars do not admit any miracle, or any revelation, and particularly any such idea as that of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nay, but these rejections were not *results* of the early rationalists. They were the things which those former rationalists set out to prove by the methods of strict science. The very next generation of scholars of the same type pooh-poohs their science and scorns those things which they offered as "precise results." I hold that there is some scientific ground for expecting the same fate to overtake the rationalistic critics of to-day.

*B.—The New Scholarship Rests on an Unscientific Basis in the Present.*

For, in the second place, the scholarship of the heroes of radicalism to-day not only does not prove its points, but it is built up so largely from a ground of unscientific assumption as to be seriously unworthy of our respect. Our modern science has become tremendously impressed with the uniformity of natural law. It seems to me an unsafe conclusion that Almighty God could not make an exception to that uniformity, if He should ever choose to, or that He could never choose. But I mention that reserve of my own mind by way of personal confession. For the sake of argument I will assume that the world and God Himself are governed by a law which abides eternally and cannot be broken at any point. Then I declare that even so it is unscientific to *assume* that it is against that law that Almighty God should subsist eternally in Three Persons in an unbroken Unity of Being. It is unscientific to assume that it is against that law that God should sometimes make revelations to men. It is unscientific to assume

that it is against that law that the eternal Son of God should come into the world, and become Incarnate in man's nature. It is unscientific to assume that such an Incarnation might not take place quite naturally by birth from a virgin mother, or again, that a perfectly holy man, being also a Divine Man, could not quite naturally give up his body to death, and then bring it again alive from death, and live in it forever. True science is modest in assumption. It does not hasten to say that things are impossible as being against the law of nature, when it does not happen to know. It is consistent with science to take any of these negative assumptions which I have just mentioned, as working hypotheses, and see how they fit with any ascertained fact. But to take them as certainties is unscientific, and much modern scholarship does assert all these suppositions as certainties, the questioning of which argues an ignorant or a feeble mind.

If these presuppositions of non-belief are to be accepted as ground principles, *cadit quæstio*—there is no more to be said. If, however, a true science holds these preliminary questions open, let us consider whether the latest attempt at accounting for the story of the resurrection is a really scientific piece of history-making. It assumes, as I have said, that St. Peter and some other disciples were fanciful, and saw things. They thought that they had really seen our Lord alive, and the story grew. The Apostles came back to Jerusalem and began to preach Jesus and the Resurrection. But I confess, the story puzzles me sorely. We are told that it was a credulous age. I know that among the Greeks and Romans it was a very sceptical age. There was a general breaking down of old religion and a general contempt for wonder-stories of gods and goddesses. Even in Judaism there had come to be a rationalistic, sceptical

party, the Sadducees, and that party was actually in power, the High Priest of the time being of that way of thinking.<sup>12</sup> But suppose that the little group of Galilean Apostles were for their part unlearned, credulous, superstitious persons, with never really a doubting Thomas among them. What had they to preach? Nothing, it would seem, but hopes of an earthly Messianic Kingdom, with no Messiah ready to assume the reins of power after all.

*C.—The New Scholarship is obliged to make out St. Paul to be a victim of delusion, and of the same delusions as a group of uneducated Galileans.*

But the real centre of the difficulty of such a story comes when we reach St. Paul. He, at any rate, is no credulous ignoramus, out of touch with scholarship and its cold analysis. He is a university man, trained with the best training of both Greek and Jew, and his is the strongest mind that makes itself felt in the whole history of the first Christian century, save only the human mind of the Divine Lord Himself. He, the gentleman and scholar, had opportunity to hear the stories of Peter and other chief disciples. He had a chance to sift them. Nay, this keen-minded scholar tells us that he had had repeated visions and revelations of his own. Even while still a persecutor, he had seen Jesus Christ, in the body, glorified. Bear in mind that St. Paul had begun to have these experiences before he had met any of the original Apostles, and before he had fallen under the contagion of their influence. If St. Paul was deluded, it was wholly a separate and utterly different experience of delusion from that of St. Peter and his companions.

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<sup>12</sup> One cannot but ask. Did this skeptic party in power never order the examination of Joseph's tomb in the rock?

Whatever improbability hovers about the suggestion that he also was a deluded man, it is an entirely distinct and clearly additional improbability. Now note another point. The favorite reconstructions of this history to-day make St. Paul the real founder of our Catholic Theology, the real giver of the Christian Faith. But surely that notion refuses utterly to be fitted with St. Paul's own testimony, and no one dares question now that St. Paul was an honest man and a man of powerful mind. It is accepted by scholars generally that St. Paul wrote the Letters to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, which have come down to us as his. See what they say. St. Paul is sure that there is something that is of authority in Christianity, something that must be received and believed. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." That is what St. Paul tells the Galatians. And, further, this clear-headed scholar makes the astonishing claim, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which I preached unto you is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Nor was this so necessary "Gospel" a way of life, after all. Nay, it was really a set of ideas such as Christians considered necessary forty years later. For look at what St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Then he goes on to give us a glimpse of what this Gospel was. "For I delivered unto you,



first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Then he goes on to amplify the proofs of the resurrection. Certainly he has made it evident that his Gospel was something to be believed.

"But St. Paul was deluded," our moderns will say. "He thought that he got a faith by a revelation. That in itself proves that he got it out of his own head. For that is where all revelations are made up—in the heads of those who think that they get them from heaven." What, then, are we to do with St. Paul's statement that after several years of work he went up to Jerusalem, expressly to communicate this "Gospel" of his to the earlier Apostles, to see if it agreed with theirs, and found that it did.<sup>13</sup> What St. Paul thought that he had received by revelation as "the Gospel," he found the Apostles of earlier calling holding in the same way. Was this a case of parallel delusions? That the earlier Apostles could be deluded, as this imaginary history requires, seems to me an improbability. That St. Paul could be so deluded, is another and a distinctly greater improbability. That they and he, having so different minds and so different predisposing causes, should, being deluded, produce identical hallucinations, not only as to seeing Jesus of Nazareth, but as to a particular group of ideas, some of them start-

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<sup>13</sup> Gal. ii. 1, 2, 6, 9. Bishop Lightfoot, indeed, limits "Gospel" here to the one idea of the freedom of Grace. I am sure that that was included by fair inference, in St. Paul's mind in "the Gospel"; but I cannot think, even under the guidance of so great a man as Bishop Lightfoot, that this so essential "Gospel" meant one thing in one of St. Paul's letters, and another thing in another letter written about the same time. In view of the passage, I. Cor. xv. 1-8, I shall be obliged to think of St. Paul's "Gospel" as being equivalent to "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," and to "the Gospel" of the next century.



ling and new ideas, which He was understood to deliver as necessary for the intellectual basis of His Kingdom, is a third improbability of surpassingly high degree. It seems to me actually easier and more scientific to accept the concurrent testimony of these so different Apostles as simply true.

I trust that I have shown that it is not necessary to fall down and worship a certain German scholarship, though it somewhat self-confidently offers to give us all the kingdoms of the world, and of the other world, too. One thing I must add, before I resume, in my next Lecture, the story of what became of the Church's fixed faith and free theology in the centuries following the Age of Simple Reception. Even rationalistic scholarship and the breaking down of all sense of authority has brought us one great gain. When men thought that they must believe the Bible, they made the Bible mean whatever they felt themselves inwardly moved to believe. God's own meaning was hopelessly obscured. Now that men approach the New Testament books with no feeling that they are bound to agree with them, they are rediscovering that these books mean just what the Catholic Church has said they meant.

No one now claims that the New Testament is anything but a Trinitarian book. It begins to be recognized prevailingly that the writer of the Fourth Gospel and the writer of 2 Peter believed in Sacramental Grace. It begins to be acknowledged even that St. Paul held what are called in scorn "*magical*" views of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Harnack, in his *Expansion of Christianity* (Vol. I., p. 293), speaks of a time when Christianity had become "a religion of magic, with its centre of gravity in the sacramental mysteries." He suggests that some will protest, "From the beginning it was not so." His answer is striking. "Perhaps.

But one must go far back to find that beginning, so far back that this extremely brief period now eludes our search entirely." Truly there speaks the scientific historian. He has his prejudices, to be sure. It grieves him that he cannot find a recorded moment when the life of the Church was not felt to be a sacramental life. But as there is no such moment to be found, he will not draw one from his fancy. And to the same scholar we are indebted for bringing the dating of most of the early Christian writings nearer the traditional dating than scholars of his class had for long been willing to see, and more especially for establishing in the midst of the critical camp the Lucan authorship of the Third Gospel and the Acts. With each generation Protestant scholarship shifts its ground. With each generation it concedes as facts, necessary for the foundations of a true history, more of the things which we have been brought up to recognize as the just foundations of our Catholic Tradition.

### III.

The Keeping of God's Balance in the Period of the  
General Councils: where the Church succeeded,  
and where the Church began to fail.



## SYLLABUS OF LECTURE III.

### I.

#### NEW CONDITIONS AND THEIR CAUSES.

In the midst of decaying religions the religion of Christ felt somehow to be a power, the mould into which the thought of the coming age was to be poured. Men drawn thus to try Christianity without knowing what it really was. Then Conversion of Emperor made Church suddenly fashionable, and brought in a flood of unconverted converts.

### II

#### HOW FAR THE CHURCH SUCCEEDED IN THIS PERIOD. SHE DID KEEP THE FAITH.

Desire to get rid of mystery in religion leads to successive attempts to readjust the old Faith, each of which would really have made a new one. The four great heresies successively met, Arian, Apollinarian, Nestorian, Eutychian.

### III.

#### THE CHURCH'S FAILURE TO KEEP FREEDOM UNIMPAIRED.

Excuses for such failure. The Church is almost swamped with the inrush of members who do not care for the Church's Constitution. The Church seems to be on the point of apostasy and internal break-up, suffering worse horrors than from any external persecution. Men feel that something must be done. Hence come two evil results:

A. The Hardening of Dogmatism. Too large a subject to examine in detail. Single illustration from treatment of Origen's opinions in this period, ending with his condemnation by name as a heretic, though with no mention of any particular opinion as heretical, in the Fifth General Council, A. D. 553.

B. The Church Assimilated in Organization to the Kingdoms of this World.

Old equality of Bishops, meeting in council in republican fashion, gives way to a graded hierarchy, in which some Bishops have authority over others. This development leads naturally to a sense of need of a supreme head, and thus in the East to Erastianism, prostrating the Church before the Civil Power, whether Christian or Mahometan, and in the West to a Papacy.

#### IV.

FORCES GOING TO MARK OFF THE NEXT PERIOD (A. D. 800-1500) AS NEW.

- (1) The creation of a new social order, typified in the coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor of the West.
- (2) The appearance of a true "Papacy."
- (3) The production of the Forged Decretals.
- (4) The separation of East and West.



### LECTURE III.

THE KEEPING OF GOD'S BALANCE IN THE PERIOD  
OF THE GENERAL COUNCILS: WHERE THE  
CHURCH SUCCEEDED, AND WHERE THE CHURCH  
BEGAN TO FAIL.

REVELATION XII. 15.—And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream.

ST. JOHN XVIII. 36.—Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world: if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.

In my former Lectures I have tried to show that the idea of a balance of two opposing forces, dogmatism and free thought, is a divine idea, and that the particular balance of these two forces which we have inherited, as having the Catholic Creeds imposed upon us as a fixed faith, and all the remaining field of Christian thought left open for a free theology, is really a plan of the Divine Wisdom. Now I have to show what manner of time followed the Age of Simple Reception, and what in this next age, the "Age of Dogmatism," befell what I have called God's Plan. I must limit myself in the present Lecture to that first period of the Age of Dogmatism, which I have called the Period of Dogmatic

Intolerance Defensive, extending from A. D. 300 to A. D. 800. I must speak first of the new time itself.

### I.—NEW CONDITIONS AND THEIR CAUSES.

As we pass from the third century to the fourth, we feel that we encounter a sudden and startling change. The most superficial student of Church History must feel it, I think. It is a permanent change, too. From three hundred years of peace we pass to five hundred years of almost constant storm. Some of you may think that I exaggerate. But when I speak of "years of peace," I am not unmindful of strifes and schisms that troubled the Church of the first three centuries. Heresies set up rival churches, but the Church simply disclaimed all responsibility for them, and passed on undisturbed. Fanaticisms, like those of Montanus and Novatian, made schisms, which did distress the Church's heart, but even so, every such schism constituted a loss, rather than a deadly wound. No controversy, and no separation, of those earlier days, tore at the Church's vitals as did the successive agonies of the Arian, Apollinarian, Nestorian, and Eutychian heresies in the centuries following. Comparatively speaking, this transition is a passage from peace to storm.

Now great changes must have great causes. It will not do to say that the attempt to confine thought was bound to be a failure anyhow, that those who have the passion for dogmatic authority will never be content until they have everything brought under strict rule (as Wilfrid George Ward used to say that he wished he could have a fresh Papal Bull brought in with his newspaper every morning), and that those who want freedom of thought will never be content while any line of thought is not free. A scheme that was inherently

unfit for human nature would hardly have gone on without showing signs of strain for nearly three centuries, and human nature was no different force in the fourth century from what it had been in the first and second and third. The new conditions must have been made by a new cause. What made the Church's life in the next five centuries, nay, in all the next twelve centuries, following A. D. 300, so different from the Church's life in the three centuries before that date? To put the answer in a word, the Church had become a popular force.

It was a condition that had been preparing for some time. There are moments in history when certain ideas are "in the air." A host of people are moved by them. The man in the street thinks in terms of them. The idea of Evolution is thus "in the air" to-day. Hundreds of thousands of people who could not give any satisfactory account of what that word means, do yet cherish the word, and sincerely reverence it, as somehow standing for a new hold that the mind of man has taken on the facts of life. They have not arrived at the idea by deep study, by profound reflection. (The psychology of a crowd, I may remark here, is a mystery far beyond that of a single mind.) Only somehow the idea that "Evolution" is a great key to the mystery of the universe has taken possession of modern thought. An appeal to the uniformity of nature's laws will thrill an audience of three hundred in which not three persons know clearly the meaning of the phrase. Well, in some such way as that, I imagine—I acknowledge that this is really a guess—a world full of dead and dying religions began to get a vague idea that this new religion called Christianity was really a power, and therefore must contain a truth. A sense of failure haunted the thought of the ancient world. Here was a new

vision of success. The old religions were dying in spite of ancient endowments and state aid. Here was a religion that was persecuted fearfully, and still it grew. I make bold to say that in the early years of the fourth century, and even while Diocletian was ordering his medal struck, to commemorate "the blotting out of the Christian Name," that strange force which we know as "public opinion" was concluding that Christianity was the coming power, the fashion that was next to form the minds of men, the nearest "guess at truth" which the world had ever seen.

You will observe that such a movement of public opinion does not necessarily carry with it any sympathy with Jesus Christ, any real understanding of His religion, any readiness to give one's life to be made over under His direction, any longing for personal fellowship with Him. It was not much more than a feeling that this new religion was going to rule the world, and that into this mould the world was about to pour its thought. So far as this popular feeling had begun to look to Christianity as embodying truth, it had but little idea of what that truth was, and no idea at all that anything in it was really fixed and final.

That wide-spread feeling gave the Church a magnificent opportunity to get a hearing. Yet one can see that such a feeling might probably lead multitudes of people to embrace the Church's system, without in the least regarding it as divine, but merely esteeming it as the most promising mode of religious thought just now in sight. Such candidates for Church membership might be a source of deep danger to the Church. They would ask admission into the Church, caring nothing for its Creeds or its Sacraments, but only for what they had seen to be its results. They would offer to join the Church because it seemed to them to have the best reli-

gion that they had yet seen. They would find it the most natural thing in the world, when once they had got in, to go to work to make their new religion still better, to find out where it could be improved, and still more finely adapted to the needs of men. Even if that popular feeling had stood alone as a factor in making the Church to be the Church of the whole Roman world, it would have given the Church, as I said, a great opportunity. It would also have brought the Church into a great difficulty and danger.

But that popular feeling stood not alone. As the third century closed, the Church was suffering the persecution of Diocletian, the last and worst of its trials by fire. In thirteen years more the chief persecutors had died miserable deaths, toleration for all religions had been proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire, and Constantine, known to be a favorer of Christianity, had made himself the chief force in that curious partnership of rulers by which it had been Diocletian's plan to govern the vast Empire of Rome. Ten years more still, and that crude device of a Committee of Emperors was swept away, leaving Constantine, the favorer of the Christian Church, sole master of the Roman world. That settled the matter. At one bound the Church passed from being persecuted to being fashionable. I have remarked that that sub-conscious feeling that Christianity was the world's highest achievement in the way of thought would have been enough to gain the Church a hearing. Now men did not wait to give the Church a hearing. They thronged into it, hosts of them, as into something that a man must ally himself with anyhow, or lose his place in the march of events. But this mixed multitude, like those who marched with Israel out of Egypt, had not assimilated the system to which they had thus hastily attached themselves, and

the Church had no opportunity to assimilate them. In the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, St. John has a vision of the Church of God bringing forth the Man-Child, the Incarnate Saviour, who is caught up into heaven, to be Ruler over the nations. The dragon, Satan, persecutes the woman, and she is given two wings of an eagle whereby she may escape. "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream." That seems to me a very apt description, in symbolic language, of what the Church suffered for the next twelve hundred years. In the symbolism of Holy Scripture the tossing sea stands for human society, so far as it is not brought into the quiet order of the peace of God. The firm-fixed and fruitful earth stands for human society, made stable and productive through submission to the divine will. "Water as a flood" will signify some great social movement not conformed to the mind and will of God. What Satan could not accomplish by persecution, he is represented as endeavoring to bring about through a poisonous popularity. Great masses of nominal converts, thrown upon the Church in an uneven alliance of Church and world, brought the Church far more harm than the most awful persecutions could bring. And this condition of alliance, encouraging men to offer themselves as members of the Church, not because they wanted to be in fellowship with Jesus Christ, but because they wanted to be in fellowship with ruling powers, continued to be the condition of the greater part of the Church, till the outbreak of revolution in the sixteenth century. "The earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth." This flood of unconverted converts was not allowed to destroy the Church. The



power of genuine submission to the will of God prevailed over the powers of pretended loyalty and real treachery, after all. But the flood was a terrible flood.

In my attempt to deal with the effect of that flood in history, I shall have to acknowledge with sorrow that the Church of God did not succeed in keeping the balance between faith and freedom exactly according to the plan of God. It defended the faith valiantly and successfully. It allowed the field of freedom to be invaded more and more. Those who tried to change the faith the Church could always recognize as open foes. Those who encroached upon God's other field, the field of freedom, which was also a trust divinely established for the Church to guard, were not only members of the Church's own household, friends and brethren, but even the Church's particular champions. How could the Church discern dangerous foes in such? Perhaps the Church ought to have shown such insight. I suspect that if it had, it would have used more of God's gift of wisdom than the Church of to-day is applying to its present needs and dangers. At any rate I have here two stories to tell, one of success and one of failure. I will take first the story of success, showing how under repeated trials the Church kept the faith.

## II.—THE CHURCH'S SUCCESS IN HOLDING THE FAITH.

I think that the key to the whole puzzle of the perpetual strife of the five centuries after Christianity became the fashion, is to be found in a certain longing of the human heart—in a great many hearts, at any rate—to get rid of the element of mystery. It is not in religion alone that that desire shows itself. The splendid accomplishments of natural science in the last century and a half come partly out of that same desire to leave



nothing unexplained, nothing unclear. Every new mystery cleared up is another triumph in the march of human progress. But we need to remind ourselves from time to time that to clear up a mystery by an explanation which is not true, is no triumph and no success. And an explanation of a mystery which simply suppresses one of the given facts, is not only inglorious; it is a treason against the truth.

Four such treasons the Catholic Church detected and exposed in the short space of one hundred and fifty years. All the rest of this period of five centuries is but a sequel comparatively. In three half centuries the main battle of the defence of the faith was fought out.

What was the battle-ground? Where did the impatience of mystery first show itself in a half-converted Church? When the Christian Revelation was first offered to the heathen world, in the century following the birth of Christ, the mystery that weighed heaviest on the hearts of men was the mystery of the origin of evil. The air was thick with fanciful schemes for avoiding the difficulty of believing in a good God as the Creator of a bad world. The founders of such philosophies did not try to remain in the Catholic Church. "They went out from us, but they were not of us," says St. John. But mainly the inventions of those first heretics had now, in the fourth century, grown cold and stale. The world was tired of them. It was ready to give up the mystery as insoluble, and to accept the revelation of the world's beginnings as God gave it. But with the second great revelation of the Christian Creed—the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God—the case was different. The outside world had not concerned itself at all with that group of mysteries till now. Here, then, was a ground of battle naturally prepared.

Naturally, too, the first mystery to be dealt with was

that of the revelation of the Blessed Trinity. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, a man who had before been mixed up in unseemly quarrels, over matters of Church discipline,<sup>14</sup> advanced the opinion that our Lord was not "very God," but only "God" in a loose and derived sense, as having been created by God for a great headship over the universe and granted a sort of partnership in the Divine Nature. An Arian of the highest type could say that the Divine Son was begotten before the ages, and that He was not created from things non-existent, but from the Father only. Such an Arian would anathematize one who should say of our Lord, that "there was a time when He was not"; but his subtlety would make a distinction here, too fine for most of us to follow. He would *not* sign a statement anathematizing one who should say of our Lord, "There was when He was not," without putting in "*a time*." The Arian held that our Lord was brought into being before the beginning of time, but yet that before that beginning, "there was—when He was not."

Certainly Arius himself was a son of the Church, a disciple of the theological school of Antioch, a city, by the way, which was marked by much intellectual activity and many vagaries, and not unaffected by Eastern subtlety and Eastern pride of thinking. He was no new comer, swept in on a rising wave of imperial fashion. Let me not, for a moment, be understood as claiming that the Church never produced heretics in the days when she was persecuted by the world. On the contrary, the second century, in the very period of Tertullian and Irenaeus, produced from within the Church a heresy of explanation of this very doctrine of the Trinity. What is known as the Sabellian heresy described the Three

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<sup>14</sup>See "Meletius (2)" in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

Persons of the Blessed Trinity as only three aspects of the God-head, three masks—the Latin word *Persona* means “a mask”—from behind which one Divine Love made Himself known to His creatures. Arianism was, in part, the attempt of a somewhat heavy mind to avoid this Sabellian notion. But this very comparison of two heresies will illustrate further what I have been saying about these two periods of time. In the second century, the Sabellian notion arose, made converts, was pronounced to be heresy, and that was all. It had no power to trouble the Church distressfully. In the fourth century, Arius offered his heresy, and lo! it found a culture-medium all prepared for it, and flourished till it seemed for a time as if it was going to fill the world.

Arius, excommunicated after a hearing by a Council of Bishops in Egypt, appealed to the Christian Emperor on the ground that he had suffered injustice. Constantine, seeing rightly that it was no proper business of his to try to decide whether a man was fulfilling the conditions of membership in the Church of Christ, called a Council of Bishops to meet at Nicaea, in A. D. 325, inviting all the Bishops of the Catholic Church, and offering imperial help to cover the expenses of travel for all who should attend. The Council was to meet on the twenty-fifth day of July, the day on which Constantine would enter on the twentieth year of his reign. Over three hundred Bishops came together—318 is the traditional number—and (as I noted in my second Lecture) there was nearly an absolute unanimity among them as to two points, as to the fact that the Church had a revealed faith, of which its Bishops were the chief trustees, and as to what that faith was. Over three hundred voices united in this double testimony. The only objectors were a tiny group of men who wished to gain liberty to follow a new religion. There remained

two questions for the Council to consider: Was the teaching of Arius really inconsistent with the delivered faith, so that no charity could reconcile his utterances with the Church's creed? If so, what form of words could be found that would serve to warn simple folk from falling into such error, being deceived? As to the first of these points, it became clear that the opinions of Arius were truly of the nature of heresy. As to the second, the Council after much discussion adopted as its own a form of creed which had been used in the Church of the Palestinian Caesarea, adding certain phrases, especially the famous "of one substance (in Greek *ὁμοούσιος*) with the Father." On that word, *Homoousios*, one might hang an essay on the strength and weakness of creed-forms. On the side of strength, it proved to be a watch-word to which Catholic Christians could rally, and the one test which no Arian could ever pass undiscovered. Arians would use words in strange, artificial senses. They would put forth confessions of faith intended to humbug the unwary—no milder word than "humbug" will at all meet the case. They would accept with tricky, evasive interpretations, all their own, almost any formula that a Catholic orthodoxy could produce. But that one word, *Homoousios*, would reveal the difference in a moment. No Arian would ever agree to the use of that. He might use *Homoiousios* (*ὁμοιοούσιος*), "of like substance," yes! "*Homoousios*," never! The difference of one letter, and that the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet, was enough to make clear an abysmal difference in religious belief. On the side of weakness, on the other hand, it is only fair to say, the word had certainly been used in the preceding century by a heretical writer to convey a heretical meaning, and had in that use been condemned by a Council which carried weight. It was

quite possible for honest men, faithful believers in the doctrine which the Nicene Council was trying to uphold, to misunderstand the word, and to be repelled by it. As a matter of fact, it did keep some truly orthodox men out of the orthodox communion for years. Nevertheless, one thing may be held as certain: the Nicene Council kept the faith, as it had been received in the centuries before.

But it did not put an end to controversy. No! There were too many nominal members of the Church now, who much preferred a new religion to the old. But of the fearful struggle which followed, I am not now to tell. I am engaged in cataloguing the chief offers of heresy to relieve the Church of its burden of mystery, and the Church's answers to the same. The next important offer was that of Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea. He felt the mystery of the union of our Lord's two Natures. How could one person have the boundless knowledge of God and the limited knowledge of man, the infinite wisdom of God and the finite wisdom of man? It seemed to him a happy discovery that our Lord could be thought of as One in whom the "spirit" (including in his use of that word all the nobler elements of thought and will) of an ordinary man was replaced by His Godhead. If that were indeed so, we should have no longer any right to claim the Lord Jesus as our Brother. "Bone of our bone," He would be, indeed, and "flesh of our flesh"; but it is not flesh that sympathizes with flesh, among us human beings. It is spirit that sympathizes with spirit. The Church was quick to see that it made a tremendous difference whether our Lord, made Man for man, was made a real man, and an entire man, or only a mechanism of flesh and blood, divinely worn to enable God to show love by suffering. In the second General Council, at Constantinople, A. D.



381, the Church was prompt again to declare that the full reality of our Lord's manhood was a part of the delivered faith, and so a thing sealed and sure.

But, very much as the Sabellian heresy seems to have led Arius into heresy on an opposite side, so that very suggestion of Apollinarius, which never seems to have had much following, was discussed in the schools, and inflamed the ardor of a far more influential man to show the Church a clear way out of such difficulties. Nestorius, called from a monastery near Antioch, and from that same Eastern theological school which had produced Arius, to be Patriarch of Constantinople, astounded and distressed his people by preaching against the title of Theotokos (*θεοτόκος*), "Bringer-forth of God," which orthodox piety had given to the Blessed Virgin. "She did not bring forth God," Nestorius was understood to say. "She brought forth a man with whom the Eternal Word entered into a wonderful partnership." Even that partnership Nestorius would rather call a "conjunction" (*συνάφεια*) than a "union" (*ἐνωσις*). "A perfect human nature can only subsist in a human personality." That was the argument of Nestorius. "If you are to save the truth of our Lord's perfect humanity as against the Apollinarian teaching," said the Patriarch, "you must acknowledge a human personality of the man Jesus. In fact, you must say that Jesus is a man, with whom the Son of God condescends to dwell." Again the Church had grace to see that this teaching, however well intended, was utterly inconsistent with the revealed faith. The revelation concerning Jesus Christ said that He was the "Son of God," "God of God, Light of Light," "of one substance with the Father," "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." It was not said of two different persons; it was all said of One. If there were two per-



sons, then it was not God who died as a sacrifice for our sins, but only a superlatively good man. It was not God who raised up His own human body from the grave, and carried it up to heaven. A third General Council was convened at Ephesus, A. D. 431, and the notion of two personalities in Christ was condemned as heresy. The history of that Council is not an edifying history, but the doctrinal pronouncement of the Council was sealed by the Church at large, as expressing the Church's judgment as to the Church's memory.

Only twenty years passed before another General Council had to be assembled, that of Chalcedon, A. D. 451. Eutyches, abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, in his fear and hate of the Nestorian teaching, dividing our Lord into two, and leaving us a Jesus that was not really Divine, and a Christ that was not really human, had fallen into a perversion of his own. This unhappy Eutyches would save the doctrine of the oneness of the Divine Man by declaring that in His Incarnation He joined the Godhead and the Manhood together so utterly that they were fused into one composite nature. Again the Church had grace to see that if the God-Man is to wear a perfect manhood everlastingly, His Manhood must be distinct and separate, not sunk, not lost and swallowed up, in His Deity.

Of the remaining General Councils I need not speak. They did but little more than re-enforce the doctrinal decisions of the first four. But I must say a word here of the relation of the Church's memory to the Church's judgment in this matter of the defence of the faith. Granted the existence of a revealed faith, one sees that it is first a matter of memory to keep it safe as a deposit, and then a matter of judgment to see what is really consistent with it, and what is not really consistent with it, in the shifting speculations of human phil-

osophy. In the first three centuries the keeping of the faith was almost wholly a matter of memory. What came up in the way of heresy was generally offered as better than the Christian faith, and not as an interpretation of it. In the fourth and fifth centuries the matter was mostly one of judgment. The original contents of the faith had become a matter of historical record, which needed no further effort of memory, but now every kind of religious thought wished to enjoy the advantages attaching to the Catholic name. But a majority *judgment interpreting* a divine message is a very different thing from a universal *memory preserving* a divine message. What right have we to claim that the decisions of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, are to be taken as a part of the faith which is from God? My answer is that our Lord expressly promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide His Church into all the truth. "All the truth" certainly did not mean all the truth about all things, nor all the truth about all that we long very much to know. But if our Lord has really given His Church a central deposit of most especially important truth, in order to give the Church an intellectual anchorage in all the years until His coming again, it does seem to me that this promise of guidance "into all the truth" must be held to justify the Church's confidence in the security of the Church's own final, general, deliberate decision of these questions of *interpretation* of the faith, as well as in her *memory* of the faith, or else that promise of our Lord is made to be of none effect. At any rate, the voice of history has consented to the voice of the Catholic Church in this matter. I know of no scholar who does not recognize that the decisions of the first four General Councils did preserve unchanged the Creed with which the Church emerged from the period of the persecutions, and that if any one of these

four heresies had been accepted, it would actually have changed the old religion of the Church into something different. If the faith of the first three centuries was really from God, then the Church which came to the beginning of the ninth century had a divine faith still. Since the eighth century the providence of God has made the holding of General Councils impossible. As long as they could be held, and were held, no General Council ever decreed anything as necessary to be believed by a Catholic Christian, which would not have been regarded as necessary to be believed in the days of Cyprian of Carthage and Dionysius of Alexandria, or in the days of Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus and Tertullian. Not only was the faith kept, but so far as conciliar decisions are concerned, freedom was not infringed. So far the Catholic Church in these five centuries succeeded in carrying out the divine plan.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> I cannot forbear to quote here from "the judicious Hooker" his summing up of the fundamentals of Christology: "There are but four things which concur to make complete the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ: His Deity, His Manhood, the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other, being joined in one. Four principal heresies there are which have in those things withstood the truth: Arians by bending themselves against the Deity of Christ; Apollinarians by maiming and misinterpreting that which belongeth to His human nature; Nestorians by rending Christ asunder, and dividing Him into two Persons; the followers of Eutyches by confounding in His Person those natures which they should distinguish. Against these there have been four most famous ancient General Councils: the Council of Nice to define against Arians, against Apollinarians the Council of Constantinople, the Council of Ephesus against Nestorians, against Eutychians the Chalcedon Council. In four words, ἀληθῶς, τελῶς, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀσυγχύτως, *truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly*; the first applied to His being God, and the second to His being Man, the third to His being of both One, and the fourth to His still continuing in that One Both; we may fully by way of abridgment comprise whatsoever antiquity hath at large handled either in declaration of Christian belief, or in refutation of the aforesaid heresies. Within the compass of which four heads, I may truly affirm, that all heresies which touch but the person of Jesus Christ, whether they have risen in these later days or in any age heretofore, may be with great facility brought to confine themselves."—*Ecclesiastical Polity*, V. liv. 10.

### III.—THE CHURCH'S FAILURE TO KEEP FREEDOM UNIMPAIRED.

I must turn to the other side of the story, and try to show how far the Church failed in that part of her sacred trust which concerned the freedom which God had ordained for men. I go back to the point where I said that the dragon cast out of his mouth a flood of waters to destroy the Church, and that the earth did succeed in swallowing those dangerous waters, but that the flood was a terrible flood. I must try to give you some small idea of how terrible it came to be. Within twenty-five years from the end of the Diocletian persecution two great changes had come about. (1) It was actually a loss to a man from a worldly point of view not to be enrolled as at least an adherent of the Catholic Church. Hence the Catholic Church was well nigh swamped with members and followers who had no real appreciation of the secret of the Church's power, and were quite ready to shout for proposals of change in the Church's faith. (2) The Bishopric of an important city came to be one of the great prizes of a worldly ambition, and political influence, working out from the Imperial Court, could often enable a worldly man to secure such a prize. Hence it came to pass that within a few years the Church had many Bishops who had no sympathy with the Church's divine constitution and no belief in it. I do not mean to charge them with dishonesty. Some dishonest men there were among them, doubtless, but in the main the men of whom I speak were simply men who had come into the Church without accepting the Church's old tradition about necessary truth, and held precisely the modern Protestant position, that religion must be whatever men find that they want, and a change of feeling, or to put it in the more digni-

fied phrase, which means just the same thing in the end, "a new sense of need," demands a new religion by a just necessity. It was but a natural consequence of these two changes that the Church, which had kept the Catholic Faith securely for three hundred years, down to the Council of Nicaea, seemed in thirty years more to be just ready to apostatize. Arianizing Bishops got the ear of Constantine, and persuaded him that Arius had been misrepresented and treated quite unjustly. Constantine was persuaded to recall Arius from exile, only eleven years after his condemnation at Nicaea, and to order the Bishop of Constantinople to admit him to communion on a certain day. The sudden death of Arius prevented, it would seem, an immediate outbreak of persecution. But already persecution had begun in some quarters. Athanasius, now Bishop of Alexandria, was an exile from his see, having been pronounced deposed by a council of Bishops, illegally convened. The half-heathen court joyfully accepted the Arian doctrine. The next succeeding Emperors after Constantine were Arians. Arian Bishops were forced into the Church's sees, wherever the imperial power cared enough to interfere. Councils of Bishops assembled from time to time and put forth Arian creeds. That woful time came on, when, in St. Jerome's phrase, "The world groaned, and was astonished, to find itself Arian." And this was by no means a triumph of the spirit of a simple, genuine religiousness over the spirit of a narrow and disputatious dogmatism.

Let me quote a few sentences from Dr. Bright's *History of the Christian Church from the Edict of Milan to the Council of Chalcedon*. Here is the condition at Alexandria only sixteen years after the Nicene Council: "The persecutors were venting their malignity on the virgins of the Church, whom they exposed to the



fury of Arian women; they caused Eusebius, a sub-deacon, to be scourged almost to death, and sent him to the worst of all the mines, which, however, he never reached, dying on his way of the wounds which had been allowed no tending. Four citizens of distinction were scourged for remonstrating, and the Arians compelled Syrianus to scourge them a second time. 'We are beaten,' said they, 'for the truth's sake, for not communicating with heretics; beat us now as thou wilt, God will judge thee for it!' Men were persecuted for relieving the poor, for whose wants it became necessary to provide elsewhere than at the churches, the ordinary place of almsgiving. The very heathen cried shame on Arian cruelty" (pp. 78, 79). And a like story comes from the West. St. Hilary of Poitiers, Bishop and theologian, "when cruelly beaten, found support in thinking on the scourging of Christ" (p. 72). "A pious Bishop, Rufinianus, was compelled by a young Arian prelate, Epictetus of Centumcellae, to run before his chariot, until he died by bursting a blood-vessel. Lucifer<sup>16</sup> was kept in a dark dungeon at Germanicia; Eusebius, at Scythopolis, the see of an old Arian, Patrophilus, was repeatedly dragged with brutal violence down a flight of stairs. Far and near officers of the palace and of the tribunals went about threatening and denouncing all kinds of penalties to those who would not renounce Athanasius. Arian clergy sharpened the zeal of the lay persecutors. To avoid scourging, chains, false charges, exile, many gave way, and some whom Constantius personally dealt with were pent up in their houses until they repeated the words 'Athanasius is out of our Communion.' It is difficult to realize the misery of that time."

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<sup>16</sup> Lucifer of Cagliari, chief Bishop of Sardinia, is here referred to.



Yes, it is difficult to realize that misery, and perhaps students do not always realize how much worse it was than that of any persecution by the heathen in former days. For now it was the Church divided against itself, Christians persecuted by men professing to bear the Christian name, and to be contending in the Christian cause. The Lord Himself had given solemn warning, "Every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (St. Matt. xii. 25). Men felt that the Church was falling into ruin before their eyes. Something must be done. In such times of trouble the patience and the faith of the saints are very apt to break down. They broke down in the fourth century. The cure for the Church's ills lies in the slow development of character. In times of special difficulty and distress men are apt to think that the Church needs more machinery. In the fourth century the careful observer will see the Church's mind turning more and more in two dangerous directions—in the direction of a greater dogmatic severity and narrowness, and in the direction of an increase of the Church's machinery of power. Both changes are the more noticeable because the men of the fourth century received from their fathers the idea that the constitution of the Church came from our Lord Himself. Many moderns scorn the idea that our Lord gave His Church any constitution in the way of faith or order. Rightly or wrongly, orthodox Christians of the fourth century had been taught that He gave both. Yet in the face of their own belief that our Lord Himself had settled what was necessary for His Church to believe, and how He wished His Church to be governed, men came to feel that in both points it was necessary to improve.

*A.—The Hardening of Dogmatism.*

Take first the increase of dogmatism. Even in the

fourth century we find men beginning to elevate doctrines of the Church to a level with articles of the Faith. It must be acknowledged that the Church's experience of heretical evasions in the fourth century had been profoundly disturbing. The Church had had some painful lessons, teaching her to be distrustful, and to look anxiously in the utterances of her sons for significances inconsistent with the revealed faith. Distrust grew and grew, and with a sinking fear in good men's hearts lest the faith should somehow perish, came a growing angry bitterness of temper, a habit of suspicion, a tendency to exaggerate every appearance of evil.

It would carry us into a labyrinth of detail in which we should lose ourselves utterly, if I should try to tell the story of this development. I will illustrate it briefly from the treatment of Origen in this period. In his own age many differed from him and criticised him, but so far as I know, no one called him a heretic. In the latter part of the fourth century we find a convulsion of quarrel going on in various parts of the Church, in Egypt, in Palestine, in Constantinople, in Italy, over Origen's writings and opinions. It is a quarrel in which charges of heresy are freely bandied to and fro, and we even see an eminent Bishop and theologian, Epiphanius, of Cyprus, refusing to hold communion with holy John Chrysostom at Constantinople, unless he will anathematize Origen for his teachings of a hundred and fifty years before. The strife goes on, with deepening bitterness. The Church's fashion of thought turns more and more away from Origen. At last a local Council of Constantinople anathematizes a series of propositions drawn from his writings, and in A. D. 553 the Fifth General Council is persuaded to anathematize Origen by name as a heretic though without naming any particular doctrine of his as heretical. When the Church con-

demns men of long ago as heretics, whom the Church of their own day did not find it needful to condemn in that way, it is carrying spiritual impertinence very far.

But here let me utter a word of warning against making the very mistake of those centuries of intolerance in our own study of the same centuries. The theological fashions of a particular century in the Church's history may be utterly distasteful to us. That is nothing to complain of. It ought not even to deprive the Church of our sympathy in that part of its journey down the ages. The true doctrine of freedom is that the Church of any country and of any time has a right to make its speculations in the field of free theology, aye, and to make its mistakes. The Church of the sixth century, for example, had the same rights in the matter as the Church of the sixteenth, or of the nineteenth. That you and I may not like the prevailing fashions of thought of some past time, or of some other land, is of no more importance in the great universe than that the holders of those other fashions might despise ours. Within certain limits—very wide limits—a man has as good a right to hold Romanist opinions as Protestant opinions, and *vice versa*, and each Christian owes a kindly sympathy and respect to the other Christian. The only things which one Christian has a right to find serious fault with in any other Christian's theology are (1) departure from the divine faith, and (2) intolerance of the divine freedom. It must be acknowledged that between the end of the third century and the end of the eighth, intolerance of the divine freedom was a growing sin. But also we are by no means free from that sin to-day. There are many Christians who claim absolutely unlimited freedom in theology for themselves, but if they found some fellow Christians using their freedom to recommend the worship of images and

the invocation of saints, they would condemn them as harshly as the sixth century people condemned Origen.

From the hardening of the Church's doctrinal system I turn to the hardening of the Church's organization. That also must in the long run affect freedom of thought within the Church's borders.

*B.—The Church Assimilated to the Kingdoms of this World in Organization.*

We sometimes hear of "a monarchical episcopate." I venture to say that the episcopate in the second and third centuries was not monarchical. The single Bishop did not make his own laws and rules. Laws were made by the body of Bishops of a province acting together in a somewhat republican fashion, every member of the council being equal with every other. Even in the end of the fourth century Jerome holds that a Bishop of Rome and a Bishop of Eugubium, a Bishop of Constantinople and a Bishop of Rhegium, are all equal in office and authority, all being equally successors of the Apostles (Jerome, Letter 146, *ad Evangelum*). But even in the fourth century one sees the beginnings of assimilation of the Church's government to the government of the Empire. The chief Bishops of provinces begin to be looked upon as responsible heads of their provinces, who must have authority, therefore, over their fellow Bishops. The chief Bishop of a huge imperial "Diocese" with many provinces in it must be styled "Exarch," like the imperial governor of the same "Diocese," and must be held responsible for, and therefore be given power over, all the Bishops of all the provinces of that great region. Everywhere there is a demand for a power to settle questions and for a responsible head to every thing. It is all very natural, but it was not exactly our Lord's plan, as the Church had claimed to have re-

ceived it from Him. This movement having once begun, however, led to quite different results in East and West, respectively. In both cases it led up naturally to the setting up of a supreme monarchy over the Church. In the East, with its natural subserviency and the ever-present power of the Emperors working to guide all movements to the increase of their own dominion, a numbing Erastianism took hold upon the Church, and the head of the Civil State became the Church's supreme arbiter. Only the Eastern Church, falling deeper into slavery to the Civil Power, whether Christian, or in later centuries Mahometan, clung, as with the stiffening fingers of a corpse, to the ancient faith, and to the whole fashion of doctrine which the first six centuries had developed. In the West, where the Church was left by the Imperial Power to be overrun and pillaged by barbarians, and where new and half-savage governments were built up slowly on the ruins of a fallen civilization, the Church had no chance of finding any supreme power but in itself, until it had already built up such a power, and under it learned to stand alone. At the beginning of the ninth century the Churches of the West might have fallen under the absolute rule of a Charlemagne, if they had not already produced a "Pope."

#### IV.—FORCES GOING TO MARK OFF THE THIRD PERIOD AS NEW.

I have spoken somewhat vaguely—in a subject so large it seemed impossible to particularize—about the development of stiffness both in doctrine and in order in the Period of the General Councils. I must now speak of certain definite features of the history which go to make the next period, that which extends from A. D. 800 to A. D. 1500, or from the end of the General

Councils to the beginning of the Reformation Movement, markedly a new period again. The change from my second period to my third period is not as great as from my first to my second, but it is, I think, far greater than historical students are apt to recognize. The features to which I refer are four in number, and they are these: (1) the creation of a new social order in Western Europe, (2) the appearance of a true "Papacy," (3) the production of the "Forged Decretals," and (4) the separation of East and West. These four features tend powerfully to the making of a new condition of things in the life of the Western Church, and they cluster closely enough around the year 800 to make it fair to take that year as a turning point in our story.

(1) On the twenty-fifth day of December, A. D. 800—it was the first day of the year 801, and of the ninth century, according to the reckoning then in use at Rome—Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was anointed by Leo, Bishop of Rome, as Emperor of the West. It was a striking symbol of the establishment of a new order of civilization and government in Western Europe, almost the creation of a new world. I speak of it to remind you what a tremendous break with the past was involved in the making of that new world, and of what new material it was actually made. Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Franks, a series of barbarian hordes, had poured down on the Roman Empire of the West, destroying its government, its civilization, its learning, and in large measure exterminating its people. There again was a flood of waters indeed! At the end of the sixth century, Gregory the Great was reputed to be the principal scholar of the West, but even he knew no Greek, even after being for several years an envoy to the court of Constantinople, and he had serious difficulty in getting Greek documents properly translated for him, when he



was Bishop of Rome. The old learning had been swept away. Now civilization and learning were being slowly built up again. But what could these rising nations of the Frankish Empire know of the original tradition of the Church? There was every opportunity to get it profoundly altered, very little protection for it against innovation. If ever there was a history without a past, to hang upon, or to be responsible for, it was the history of that Frankish Empire that rose out of the floods of the barbarian invasions.

(2) For a new people a new form of Church government. What do I mean by saying that the beginning of a true papacy is to be dated from the beginning of the ninth century? I mean that "papacy" is not merely a system of government in which a chief Bishop is called "the Pope." The Bishop of Alexandria has always been called "the Pope of Alexandria," and there has never been any "papacy" there.<sup>17</sup> Gregory the Great shall tell us what the true meaning of "papacy" is, and also, incidentally, what an evil thing it is. When he heard that John the Faster, Bishop of Constantinople, was persistently calling himself "Ecumenical Bishop," and "Ecumenical Patriarch," Gregory was fierce in his denunciation of such arrogance and pride. He appealed to the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch to join him in protesting against so monstrous an assumption. Those men of Oriental habit thought that such high-sounding titles of honor did not mean enough to hurt anybody, and he of Alexandria actually tried to soothe Gregory's ruffled feelings by addressing *him* also as

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<sup>17</sup> It may be of interest to know that the proper title of the Patriarch of Alexandria is "The Most Blessed and Holy Pope and Patriarch of the Great City Alexandria, and of all Egypt, Pentapolis, Libya, and Ethiopia: Father of Fathers, Pastor of Pastors, Archbishop of Archbishops, Thirteenth Apostle and Œcumenical Judge."

"Universal Pope." But Gregory was in deadly earnest. He felt sure that the title he opposed was meant to lead up to a claim that the Bishop of the Emperor's own capital should be a chief Bishop, somehow governing all the other Bishops on God's earth, and that idea was enough to put Gregory into a frenzy. St. Gregory himself sincerely believed that our Lord meant the Bishop of Rome to be the chief Bishop in the world, a natural leader and counsellor to all his brethren. But he did not think himself lord over them, nor different from them, and so he wrote, "I beg your Holiness, whom I love so well, not to do this again. For what you give to another unreasonably, is taken away from yourself.

. . . If your Holiness calls me Universal Pope, you deny that you are yourself that which you say that I am universally. God forbid." "None of the Pontiffs ever consented to use this unique title," so Gregory writes to John the Faster himself, "lest all Bishops should be deprived of the honor due to them, by the bestowal of so peculiar a distinction upon one." And to Eusebius, Bishop of Thessalonica, Gregory writes, "If one is universal Bishop, it results that the rest of you are not Bishops." Plainly, this Gregory, who said also, "If any fault be discovered in a Bishop, I know of none who is not subject to the Apostolic See," a remark far removed from the Church's original tradition,—even he had not arrived at any consciousness of being a "universal Bishop," or sole Bishop, or Bishop in a class all by himself. It is a serious step forward, then, when within one hundred years from Gregory's death, we find his successors beginning to use this very title, which Gregory had so earnestly disclaimed and denounced. It takes another hundred years still to bring us to a full-grown papacy, but in the ninth century we find that, too. About A. D. 830 another Gregory (fourth

Roman Bishop of that name) rebukes certain Bishops of Gaul for addressing him as "Pope and brother." He is not willing to be looked upon as a brother-Bishop, not he! "It would be more fitting," he wrote, "that in addressing the Roman Pontiff you should show him simply the reverence belonging to a father." When "Pope" comes to mean a Bishop different in kind from other Bishops, then a true papacy has begun. I ask you to notice that it begins right here, at the beginning of my Third Period, and greatly helps to make it new.

(3) Here also belongs a novelty which became a fruitful source of novelties, the collection of documents known as "the Forged Decretals." "But why," the historical student may ask, "Why pay any attention in these days to that curious collection of pretended letters and decrees of early Bishops of Rome, which no scholar defends, and on which not even Roman controversial writers place any dependence?" I bring it up here, because while no one pays any respect to it now, it was a very great factor indeed in the actual development of the next following centuries. I read in a pamphlet of Bishop Grafton that Gratian's collection of the laws of the Church includes 324 quotations from letters of the first four centuries, and 313 of them are from letters now known to be forgeries.<sup>18</sup> The "Forged Decretals" passed unquestioned for six hundred years, and in all that time they poisoned the wells of truth. The honest scholar, going to what he supposed to be history to learn his duty, was made to believe that it was a matter of divine order that the Church should submit to every decision of the Bishop of Rome. Dr. Harnack calls this "the most fateful piece of legend-making that ever

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<sup>18</sup> Bishop Grafton informs me that the authority for this statement is the late Dr. George Salmon, of Trinity College, Dublin, in his *Infallibility of the Church*, pp. 448-9.

found place in the Church's development," and says that the work of the forger "overlaid the actual history of the Church, like the cloth that is laid on the face of the dead." "From that time," Dr. Harnack goes on, "men looking into the Church's past saw substantially nothing but a reflection from the Church's present."<sup>10</sup> After this time all testimonies of saints to the duty of submission to the Roman See are testimonies of saints deceived.

(4) The fourth feature of the ninth century which I regarded as tending to make a new day in history was the separation of East and West. The formal separation comes late in the century, to be sure, and there are fitful renewals of intercourse in centuries later still; but the end of real friendly union and mutual correction comes early. From early in the ninth century the Church of the West ceases to be guided or restrained in its pursuit of new fashions in theology by any influence of Eastern opinion. In that separation of East and West the last barrier against innovation was thrown down.

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in article "Pseudo-Isidor," in Hauck and Plitt's *Realencyclopädie für Prot. Theol.*, Vol. 16.



#### IV.

A View of the Third Period, in which Dogmatism rules unchecked, and of the Fourth Period, in which Free Thought Strays unguided.





## SYLLABUS OF LECTURE IV.

### A. The Period of Dogmatic Intolerance Offensive.

The Church enters on the Third Period of her History, crippled and deceived, and filled with a false ambition to make the world go right by force.

#### I.

##### SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE MEDIAEVAL DOGMATISM.

- (1) The Doctrine of Transubstantiation.
- (2) The Doctrine of Seven Sacraments.

And (though these are not doctrinal matters), (3) and (4) Compulsory Confession and the Enforcement of Clerical Celibacy.

#### II.

##### THE FAILURE OF THE MEDIAEVAL EXPERIMENT, AND THE COMING IN OF THE AGE OF INDIVIDUALISM.

### B. The Period of Disintegration and Confusion.

#### III.

The Three Remedies suggested for the Mediaeval Failure: the Constitutionalist; the Absolutist; the Radical.

- (1) The Restoration of the Ancient Church, as in England.
- (2) The Creation of a New Church, as at Trent.
- (3) The Protestant Voyage of Discovery.

## IV.

THE RESULTS, AS THEY APPEAR TO-DAY.

"A kingdom divided against itself."

The hopeless break-down of the schemes of the Reactionary and the Radical.

## V.

THE BOW OF HOPE.

The sense of failure is again overwhelming men. The reaction to collectivism. The new study of old things. "Show the house to the house of Israel."

## LECTURE IV.

### A VIEW OF THE THIRD PERIOD, IN WHICH DOGMATISM RULES UNCHECKED, AND OF THE FOURTH PERIOD, IN WHICH FREE THOUGHT STRAYS UNGUIDED.

REVELATION XVII. 1, 3.—And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven vials, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; . . . and he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman, sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast.

ST. MATT. XII. 25.—Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

EZEKIEL XLIII. 10.—Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern.

#### *A.—The Period of Dogmatic Intolerance Offensive.*

It is only good people, I think, that make the history of the Church. Bad people may be able to modify the history in some measure. It is only those who are trying to do God's work that can really *make* history in any serious effect. But good people may make mistakes, and make some history that will have to be un-

made by and by. Our Third Period is a time of such mistakes. The barbarian invasions of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries swept over Western Europe, and buried its civilization and its scholarship, as Pompeii was buried under the ashes of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. When all other scholarship was thus buried up, scholarly theology was lost out of sight, too. Recent centuries have restored Pompeii largely, and they have restored true learning also. But such tasks were beyond the powers of the Dark Ages. The Church was both crippled and deceived. She had forgotten her own ancient constitution. She had had a false history thrust upon her. She had learned a habit of saying to people "You must believe this," or "You must do that," and she had quite lost out of her memory that her right to do this was limited to the administering of a trust. I have shown you how the Church at first simply remembered God's Faith and God's Order, and enforced them. I have shown you that the Church was obliged after a while to use her own judgment in deciding whether particular utterances were consistent with the Faith, or not. I must now show you the Church filled with the idea—a new idea, and a false idea—that it was her duty to use her own judgment in any very great question that might come up, deciding what men must believe. That was a treason against the plan of God. Yet I must remind you that much of the evil which I shall have to trace was the result of the nobly intended action of holy men. To use a phrase of my last Lecture, I might call this Third Period—A. D. 800-1500—the Period of "Saints Deceived." The Church had come to feel that it was its office in the world to make men think right and do right. It exalted authority above freedom, to the destruction of God's careful balance. It hugged to its heart the error, as old

as St. Augustine, that in our Lord's parable "*Compel them to come in*" meant that when persuasion failed, Christ's messengers were to use force to bring men to do His will. Those two words, "*You must*," became the very motto of the age. Let me give, as briefly as I may, some illustrations of this excessive assertion of authority.

### I.—SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE MEDIAEVAL DOGMATISM.

(1) The very earliest breach of the Church's constitution, and the most unconstitutional, in this Period, is found in the setting up of a new Sacrament, just in the very first years of the ninth century. All theological scholars are aware that the word *Sacrament* was a word of very indefinite, and therefore very variable, meaning for a thousand years of Christian History. Our Church Catechism defines a "Sacrament" as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us," from which follows by necessary implication, "ordained by Christ Himself." If "Sacrament" be taken to mean "an outward sign of a spiritual grace conferred," it ought to be obvious that no one but our Lord Himself could create such a thing. For instance, if it be really true, as the author of the Acts of the Apostles believed, that "by the laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given," in the early days of the Church, then that sacramental operation must have been devised and ordered by the Church's Head. No Apostle, no! nor all the Apostles, nor the whole Church together, could have invented a religious rite and assured to such as should receive it duly a special impartation of the Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit. It ought to be obvious, also, that for rites which do proceed from



our Lord, and have promises of special grace attached to them, the Church needs a technical term, to distinguish them above any other rites. The Church has now come to use the word "Sacrament" as such a technical term, and in that sense I shall use it in this lecture. But through all the early centuries the word was used very loosely for almost anything which had a symbolic meaning attached to it—an outward sign, in fact—though not understood to convey any grace. It was still being used in that way in the ninth century.

About that time, then, there appeared in the Western Church a delusion, recently imported from Greek sources,<sup>20</sup> to the effect that the anointing of the sick mentioned by St. James in his Epistle (v. 14, 15), practised freely by Christians, lay as well as cleric, in all the centuries since, and often referred to as a *sacramentum* (in the lower sense), was really a sacrament in our use of the word, as being a rite conferring spiritual grace, and was intended to give to Christian people a special preparation for death. Now I am sure that the rite mentioned by St. James was understood throughout the Church for centuries to be a symbolic rite associated with prayer for bodily healing, and not a sacrament in our sense at all. For the proof of that position I must refer you to a book on *The Anointing of the Sick in Scripture and Tradition, with Some Considerations on the Numbering of the Sacraments*, by the Rev. F. W. Puller, S.S.J.E., published by the Society for Promot-

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<sup>20</sup> I have spoken of the Western Church as having certain excuses for losing its faithful memory of the Church's constitution, and one was "the separation of East and West." Now I am saying that the Western Church got a piece of misrepresentation of a constitutional matter from the East. I am not really inconsistent, I think. The East had its own causes of confusion of memory in five centuries of controversy and bitter quarrel, and in a decaying and narrowing civilization, and it did make mistakes. Yet East and West lost many chances of correcting one another, when they fell apart.

ing Christian Knowledge. You will there find that the number of the sacraments (in the strict sense) was not understood to be precisely seven by any writer of the Western Church till the middle of the twelfth century. Then Peter Lombard, a very influential teacher, made up such a list, and the number seven caught the popular fancy, and presently the whole Western Church took it up, and even it spread back to the East. It was not put into a creedal statement, to be sure, but it came to be regarded as an idea that must be received. Here, then, was a double breach of the Church's divine constitution—the setting up of something as a sacrament which our Lord did not offer to His Church as a sacrament, and the demand that all men accept this innovation as a matter of necessary belief.

(2) For my second illustration I will take the elevation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation into the position of an Article of the Faith. Most certainly, when the Church of Western Europe began to enforce the doctrine of "Seven Sacraments," as a doctrine necessary to be believed, its error was chiefly an error of failing memory. The Church had no idea of asking people to receive as a sacrament anything which had not been so received by our Lord's command and from the beginning. The Church was simply deluded about a matter of history. The imposition of the idea of Transubstantiation may illustrate a different sort of error—the new error of supposing that the Church had power to settle doctrinal questions authoritatively, out of her own mind.

The case stands thus: The Church had lived for eight centuries without quarrel as to the nature of her Treasure in the Holy Eucharist. It was always held to be "of faith," I am sure, that the Holy Ghost, the Life-Giver, finds one of His chief means of giving life in

that Sacrament, and we have our Lord's word for it that the consecrated bread and wine are His Body and His Blood. But it seems probable that our Lord never explained to His Apostles what He meant by those mysterious words, and certainly the Church for a thousand years made no claim that any particular explanation of those words was part of the Faith delivered to her to keep. When, then, the Council of the Lateran (a Council assembled at Rome, A.D. 1215, under the presidency of that great man, Pope Innocent III., and attended by nearly 500 Bishops, more than 800 abbots, and many proxies, representing Bishops and abbots that could not be there) decreed as with authority that in the Holy Eucharist our Lord's Body and Blood were verily contained under the forms of bread and wine, "the bread being transubstantiated into His Body and the wine into His Blood by the Lord's power," that great Council infringed the ancient constitution of the Catholic Church, daring to add to what it would henceforth teach as the necessary faith of a Christian, what it well knew had not been taught as in any way a necessary faith, in the ages before. But here let us try to do exact justice. You may think—I think myself—that this famous doctrine offers us an explanation of our Lord's words which is founded on a false metaphysic, and cannot, therefore, be true. But if our dear Mother, the Church of England, or our own American Catholic Church, or any other division of the Church of Christ, had ever said, or should ever say, that it would refuse its fellowship to a person who held that doctrine, such a Church would have to be adjudged guilty of this very same sin of violating the Church's divinely given constitution, of which the Lateran Council itself was guilty. That is what freedom means in God's Order—not only freedom for you and me to refuse to believe what we

cannot believe, being something which God did not give His Church to believe from the beginning, but freedom for any of our brethren to believe with passionate devotion exactly what we on our part have put from us with all our power.

(3) and (4) But the Mediaeval Church had no misgivings about its power to make over (quite consciously) the ancient constitution of the Church Catholic. I have given you an example of its making over that constitution *unconsciously*, in adopting Unction as a Sacrament, and one of changing the constitution *consciously*, in enforcing a new philosophy of the Holy Eucharist. I must mention two other changes, which are not in matters of faith, but yet are constitutional changes, and illustrate the tendency to make over the Church from a power of spiritual persuasion to a power of mechanical compulsion. I refer to the scheme of compulsory Confession, established by this same Council of the Lateran, A. D. 1215, and to the compulsory Celibacy of the Clergy, founded on a fashion of thought that was for ages a prevailing fashion, vehemently urged by Pope Gregory VII. (Hildebrand of mighty memory) in the eleventh century, and successfully imposed upon a struggling minority after some two centuries more of cruel strife. But I must not tell the story of either of these usurpations. My one concern here is to hold them up as further examples of a great process of falsification, altering God's balance of authority and liberty, and making a slavery where God Himself had planned to leave men free.

"But has not the Kingdom of God a right," it may be said, "to make laws for its own citizenship and for its own officers?" Surely, yes. The Church has a right, for example, to make a law requiring a strict fast, from the preceding midnight, before receiving Holy Com-

munions, though such a law should never be treated as if it were a divine order allowing no exceptions and no dispensations. I do hold with all earnestness, on the other hand, that the principle of human freedom is so great a principle in God's Kingdom that the Kingdom has no right to make any law, for citizens or for officers, by which those concerned, or a seriously large minority among them, will feel deeply wronged and miserably oppressed. I hold that to be a part of the divine order of the Kingdom. The Church has a right to make regulations providing that things which must be done in some way, shall be done in such and such a particular way. The Church has a right to make laws of discipline, saying what penalties shall follow violations of divine law among her children. The Church may *not* create an atmosphere of bondage and servitude for her children. That would be to make laws unconstitutionally. I venture to illustrate this idea by reference to two present day conditions. First, it is unconstitutional for Churches to make laws cutting off whole fields of recreation, sought out by the natural desires of all mankind, and regarded as innocent by the majority of persons who are ethically thoughtful. Second, in a very different line of thought, the Church in every one of its divisions that has (according to my judgment, at least) preserved the Kingdom's order enough to have a right to make the Kingdom's law, has always since the second century used liturgical worship. If we had now any strong movement in favor of non-liturgical worship among our people of the Catholic Order, or if again we could hope to draw back within the bounds of that Order any considerable number of our brethren who are now separated from it, I should say that our own American Church would be acting unconstitutionally and uncatholicly, if it did not rise up and change its laws, so



as to allow some considerable freedom for the use of non-liturgical devotions. It is of the constitution of the Kingdom that the Kingdom should be tender of human hearts.

Returning from this digression, I remark that both of these policies of the Mediaeval Church seem to me unconstitutional, because they were, and were expressly intended to be, narrowings of human freedom, enlargings of the power of ecclesiastical compulsion. Doubtless, some pious souls felt deeply that to oblige men to come to confession once a year would be to furnish men a most helpful safeguard against besetting sins, and an invaluable stimulus to high aspiration. Doubtless the imperious demand for a celibate priesthood was founded very largely upon a feeling that celibacy was a nobler estate than marriage. But I am sure that a large motive in bringing about these two policies was the desire of the Church's leaders to increase the Church's power to compel. Enforced confession would mean a subservient laity. A celibate clergy would be a caste, a standing army, a force of soldiers always at the Church's disposal, having no interest but the Church's interest, and no great gratification open to its members but the gratification of the thirst for power.

I return to the thought with which I began this lecture—it is only good people that can really make the history of the Church, or any other history. Good men, surveying thoughtfully the evils of the early Middle Age, felt a supreme need of two things—a higher authority to which appeals might be taken by anyone who suffered wrong, and more power in that supreme authority to make its decisions felt, and secure that they be carried into effect. In their eagerness to correct evils which they saw before their eyes, they failed to see



evils that lay as yet in the womb of the future. They failed to see that there is no use in giving men immense power unless one can have some reasonable assurance that men will use it fairly well. They failed to see another most important thing. The more power is attached to a particular office, the more that office will be coveted, schemed for, seized, maladministered, by men of selfish motive, and men devoid of principle. That is so even in the Church of God.

And here let me say that when an unconstitutional infringement of men's liberties is perpetrated, either in Church or State, the loss of liberty is not the worst evil that results. Unjust abridgment of liberty is a very grave loss. Loss of character is a graver one. A man cannot claim for himself more than belongs to him, no matter how innocently he may misjudge his own rights, without doing an injury to himself. If a man gets for himself more than belongs to him, of possession or of power, it will be to him, even though he may have started with an unselfish motive, an effective training in selfishness. That was what happened to the Mediaeval Church. Good men forgot its true constitution. They attempted to make reforms, and fell into unconstitutional aggressions upon human liberty. In making the Church a more powerful machine, they made it more mechanical and less spiritual. They built up—so I allow myself to judge their work—a tremendous power that invited the eager ambition of selfish men to grasp it, and worse still, a system of power that tended to make even good men selfish and mechanical in their administration. But I must turn to consider the failure of this great experiment, and the coming in of another markedly new age.

## II.—THE FAILURE OF THE MEDIAEVAL EXPERIMENT, AND THE COMING IN OF THE AGE OF INDIVIDUALISM.

I have taken for one of my texts a passage from the Revelation of St. John. Commentators have differed sharply as to the interpretation of that awful figure of the harlot sitting upon the seven-headed beast. Some say that this is a symbol of worldly and godless power showing itself in the kingdom of men. Others say that the harlot-figure is throughout Holy Scripture a symbol of unfaithfulness in the Church, the Kingdom of God. I think that they are both right. Certainly the harlot-figure stood, in St. John's day, for the City of Rome. That is precisely told us in the Book itself. It is further plain that that figure stands for a godless and selfish social order, tyrannizing over men, till at last they rise up in revolt against it. For myself, I am entirely convinced that the five "fallen" heads of the beast are five tyrannous world-empires of former time—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, the Government of Alexander the Great and his successors—that the sixth is the Roman Empire, and that the seventh is a combination (not fully realized even yet) of many governments ("ten kings") into one great world-power, to be made one probably, by a system of arbitration and conciliation, the particular piece of machinery to which good men are looking now to set up righteousness and peace.

But again I observe that the Revelation is singularly a book of divine things and their parodies. Against the revelation of the Blessed Trinity is set a ghastly disclosure of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. Against the Lamb (*τὸ ἀρνίον*, a word for "lamb" used only in the Apocalypse) is set the beast (*τὸ θηρίον*). Against the City of Jerusalem is set the City of Babylon. Against the Bride (*ἡ νύμφη*) is set the Harlot

(ἡ πόρνη). Certainly, in St. John's day, this woman was not identified with the Church, not even with the Church so far as the Church is unfaithful to her Lord. By all means let it be remembered, too, that human society itself began in a covenant relation to God. All human society, living in a godless and selfish sort, is rightly figured as a harlot. But let us observe that the *Church*, so living, is supremely worthy of that name, and must be supremely pointed out by that symbolism. The supreme example of harlotry is the failure of her who is called to be "the Bride" of Christ. The Mediaeval Church came to be living in such a godless and selfish sort. Such, at least, is my serious judgment. And the natural result followed. Men hated her, and ate her flesh, and burned her with fire.

A friend of mine, whose judgment I hold in respect, once told me that he thought me unfair to our Mother, the Church of the Middle Age, in saying that the world threw off her authority as having found her "a selfish and tyrannical guide." I pleaded in my own defence that that was what men did think and feel, at the time when the Reformation-crisis came on. Every social order that includes government has three leading offices: to make laws, to interpret laws, to levy taxes. It is understood to do all these things for the benefit of the governed. At the end of the Middle Age, men did not believe in the unselfishness of the Church as an organization. They saw individual priests and Bishops and religious, whom they loved and revered as saints. The Church as a social order they felt to be a grinding tyranny, filled with the lust of power, greedy of money, careless of justice and right. Their feeling was like that of a young French workingman that I once met in a street of Paris, who said to me, "L'Eglise, elle est un commerce!" "The Church is a money-making concern!"

For men filled with the sense of oppression it need not be a long step to being filled with the spirit of revolt. Whether it will be a long step in reality, or a short step, will depend on the presence or absence of some further predisposing causes, quickening thought. When God's time came for correcting the mediaeval mistake, there came a whole series of causes converging to that end. Most various causes they were. It may well be that some of the very largest are also among the deepest, and so are hidden from my sight. But plain to be seen by all students are these: the breaking down of the power of the nobles before the rising power of kings, all over Europe, and so the development of towns and trade, and of an ignoble aristocracy of wealth, which yet is a beginning of democracy; the invention of gunpowder, making great masses of fighting men to have a wholly new importance, as compared with fortifications, and even with a gifted leadership, thus making the common man count for more than ever before; the discovery of a new world, suddenly broadening men's vision, filling them with new dreams, and suggesting boundless possibilities for men of every rank; the Mahometan conquests in the East, culminating in the taking of Constantinople, A. D. 1453, with the curious result of scattering Greek scholars and Greek manuscripts over Europe, and restoring a true scholarship to the service of the Catholic Church of the West; the invention of printing, putting the chance to read and study, and so an opportunity, and an incitement, to do more thinking for themselves, in the way of men who were neither of the scholar-class nor rich. All of these causes helped to bring in a new movement tremendously different from anything that had gone before it. They stimulated new thoughts, new ambitions, and a new sense of the value of the individual man. And yet not

that exactly. The sense of the value of every individual man—the value of the *other* man—is a discovery of the nineteenth century, not of the sixteenth. But for every man whom they drew into the full flood of this great new stream of activity, these causes ministered a new and fiery sense of the value of *his* individual self. As we pass out of the Period of Unconstitutional Dogmatism, we enter not only a new period, but a new age. The hunger of the human heart for liberty has reasserted itself. The Age of Individualism is here.

*B.—The Period of Disintegration and Confusion, Running out into Agnosticism.*

As men entered upon that fateful time, the sixteenth century, they felt profoundly that the Church had failed as a guide of the social order. All men felt it, not merely all men of a certain sort, or of a particular environment, but all sorts of men. And (except for such as had given up religion altogether) hardly any seriously thoughtful person, in a time when an extraordinary number of people were engaged in passionately serious thinking, had any thought of living without the Church. "Without the Church," I say, rather than "without *a* Church," for as yet no man could foresee or imagine the existence of a company of rival Churches. That disintegration had to come, but no man as yet believed in disintegration, even while men were bringing it about. No man ever made disintegration a part of his theory of the Kingdom of God, until disintegration had appeared as an ugly fact. Then men had to make theories to fit their fact, and cover its ugliness out of view. But in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Church was still a unity. It was a congeries of National Churches, it should be remembered. Men would have understood what you meant, in those days, if you had

talked to them of the Anglican Church, or of the Gallican Church, of the Church of Scotland, or of the Church of Spain. But the congeries had a unity, and felt its unity, and men's eager question was, "What shall we do with the Church?"

### III.—THE THREE REMEDIES SUGGESTED FOR THE MEDIAEVAL FAILURE.

Three remedies suggested themselves to men of earnest mind, equally in earnest to redeem the Church from this shame of having failed. I shall call them the Constitutionalist, the Absolutist, and the Radical, and I shall comment on them under the following heads: the Restoration of the (Ancient) Church of England, the Creation of the (New) Roman Catholic Church, and the Protestant Voyage of Discovery.

1. The Restoration of the (Ancient) Church of England.

It is a great mistake to think of Europe in the Reformation Period as divided between Reformers and Anti-Reformers. All earnest minded men were reformers, but they had different ideals. The English ideal was that of going back to the Primitive Church, and restoring the Lord's House according to the Lord's plan. I call it the English ideal. There were men everywhere who had the same ideal, certainly. Erasmus was one of them, and it is one of the tragedies of history that Northern Germany should have followed the dash and drive of bull-headed Martin Luther, instead of the wisdom of Erasmus, slow, and uncertain, and timorous, because it was feeling its way along a line of scientific research. But leading men in England listened to Erasmus and counsellors like him, and gravely determined to restore the Church of their nation to the



primitive model. For that sake I call them "Constitutionalists." They did not succeed in accomplishing their great object all at once. They did not at once get a clear vision of what the ancient constitution of the Church really was. For instance, although they reduced the demand for belief to the constitutional measure of the Catholic Creeds, so far as the laity were concerned, they did construct for the clergy the thought-test of the "Forty-two Articles," soon most happily reduced to thirty-nine. The imposition of such articles, even upon the clergy, is, I hold, distinctly unconstitutional. It disturbs the divinely adjusted balance between freedom and fixed faith. Yet it should be said, that the framers of those Articles had the constitutional temper. They framed the most moderate and inclusive document that was put forth by any group of leaders in the whole Reformation-Movement. In an age which still had the poison of dogmatism in its veins, they felt that they must put forth an authoritative statement of their theology. If they had not done so, they would have been generally regarded as men putting to sea without a chart. I suppose that they had dogmatism enough left in them to feel so themselves. But they acted in the spirit of a large inclusiveness, which is the spirit of the Church's Head. They aimed to produce a statement which men of pretty widely opposite parties in the controversies of the day could sign. As a matter of fact, they produced a document which almost any man could subscribe who accepted the Catholic Creeds themselves, and even this was made binding upon the clergy only, and upon the members of the Universities seeking the privileges of the higher education.

The Reformation, then, in the Church of England was distinctly an endeavor to restore the Catholic Church in England to constitutional lines. I make bold

to say that Anglican scholarship is still working on the lines of that endeavor, and that American experiments have been blessed to the results of bringing our own Church nearer still to the primitive and constitutional model. But was this what I have called it, "the Restoration of the Ancient Church of England"? Or was it the making of a new Church of England, then and there? Let me say that the answer commonly given by the Church of England's defenders seems to me unsatisfactory, because too superficial. Men dwell (properly enough) on three great facts. (1) The English nation (practically) went into the new movement *en masse*. The Church had the same membership after the change as before. (2) The Church kept up its succession of Bishops by regular consecration and commission, with unbroken succession from the Apostles. (3) The Church kept the immense property of her bishoprics, her cathedrals, her parishes, and no rival body has, or ever would have had, the least chance of getting them away by any process of law. What I want to impress upon you is, that all these elements of continuity do not touch the question, "Was the movement *right*"? The real issue is precisely a constitutional issue. Was it a part of the constitution of the Catholic Church in the Middle Age that every national Church should render allegiance and obedience to the Bishop of Rome? If that be so, then when the English Church put forth its famous declaration, "The Bishop of Rome hath no more jurisdiction conferred upon him by God in this realm of England than any other foreign Bishop," the Church of England lost its Catholic standing at that point, and became a modern sect, no matter how unanimously its people may have upheld their leading men. And sad to say, there is an unconscious conspiracy of Protestant scholars to grant that point to Roman con-

troversialists. Protestant historical scholars have habitually neglected the history of the Church. They habitually use the phrase "Catholic Church" to mean either the modern Roman Communion, or a mediaeval organization which they somewhat vaguely (and quite improperly) assume to be the same thing as the modern Roman Communion. But they do greatly err. The "Catholic Church" was founded by Jesus Christ. It has fixed elements of faith and law which amount to a constitution. If any branch of that Church infringes in any way upon that constitution, it becomes so far forth un-Catholic. Any church which so infringes has a right to repent and return to the constitution in its purity. That is restoring its old self. It is not making something new. That is what the Church of England really did. In throwing off the yoke of the Papacy it was violating no constitutional order. It was restoring its old order and its old self.

2. Exactly the reverse of the English procedure was that of the Absolutists, who controlled almost entirely the counsels and the activities of the Church of France and of the Churches of the nations of Southern Europe. "Liberty" was to their minds a synonym for "license," and "freedom" for "disorder." A great experiment of governing men's souls by force had failed. Their one idea of a remedy for that failure was "more force." Let us give them the credit which they deserve for just conception and real foresight. They saw evils which did exist. They saw that the Church was as a matter of fact falling to pieces, and it was the Lord's own wisdom which they followed when they said, "If we allow the Church to be broken up and divided against itself, the Church will fall." They foresaw truly some of the consequences that would come from the ungoverned riot of individualism and free thought, in the dis-

sidence of dissent and the removal of every landmark of authority. Their fault was that instead of going back patiently to the beginnings of the Church, to recover Christ's own plan for dealing with human weakness and human needs, they hardened themselves in the assumption that the Church could have made no serious mistakes, and determined to advance firmly and far along the very path which had led to these misfortunes.

I cannot take time to trace the reactionary movement in favor of the Papacy on the Continent of Europe. I can only say that it culminated in the Council of Trent, which not only put forth many theological propositions, and anathematized any one who should refuse them, but gave its sanction to a new form of Creed put forth by Pope Pius IV. in 1563. The Creed of Pope Pius IV., which must be publicly professed by all persons who receive any promotion in the Roman Communion, by all converts, and once a year by all teachers in the Church, adds to the Nicene Creed six supplemental articles, which form no part of the ancient faith of Catholics, besides a general statement of acceptance of all doctrinal teachings of the Tridentine Council. To these has been added since, by the Council of the Vatican, another article, acknowledging the Infallibility of the Pope. Now the Fourth General Council, the Council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, pronounced an anathema upon any one who should ever put forth "a different faith" (*ἐτέραν πίστιν*), or even "a different form of Creed" (*ἕτερον σύμβολον*). It is part of the definition of the Catholic Faith by the Primitive Church, that the Faith cannot be different in one age from what it was in the Christian ages before. The Tridentine Creed, then, and still more, the Vatican Creed, is a breach of the constitution of the Catholic Church. It makes those who adopt it, so far forth, non-Catholic. It makes the

body which imposes it a new Church, and in strictness of phrase, "a modern sect." That is the contention of the "Old Catholics" of our day. I hold it to be beyond doubt a true contention. Pope Pius IV. and his Council of Trent, trying to save the old Church, made a new one. I adopt a striking phrase from a review of Father Tyrrell's *At the Cross-roads* in the *London Guardian*. "Romanism is not to be identified, in the teeth of history and criticism, with the pre-Reformation Church, or with Gospel Christianity" (*Guardian*, November 3, 1909). The so-called "Roman Catholic Church" of our time is a new body, born into the world about 350 years ago, and re-born in 1870, when it ventured once again to adopt "a different faith." I ask special attention to this, which I assert as a Catholic Principle: Nothing can make an ancient Church into a new sect except some violation of the Church's original constitution, and any such violation does relegate even an ancient Church to the position of a new sect.

3. The Church of England, it will be seen, undertook to meet the rising flood of Individualism by giving it a fair amount of room and freedom of exercise within just limits. The Church of England did not always succeed in fixing the limits justly, but at least it aimed steadily in that direction. The coalition of National Churches which in a great reaction created the modern "Church of Rome" met the rising Individualism with a direct and full defiance. It remains to see what scheme of betterment was offered by the radical party, who stood for Individualism unchecked. I ask your attention to what I have called.

#### THE PROTESTANT VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY.

I must make another digression here to say that it is hard for the modern student to understand either mod-

ern Romanism or modern Protestantism, because both are culminations. The student looks at these systems as he sees them to-day, and too lightly assumes that what they are now, they were (at least in their more fundamental conditions) three hundred years ago, or even earlier. That is a great mistake. The modern Roman Colossus that now bestrides the Atlantic Ocean has been constructed by slow degrees. It took centuries to break down the Gallican liberties, and all the other liberties of all National Churches within the Papal obedience. I give a single illustration in a matter of minor detail. The service-books of the ancient Church of Paris were not superseded by the Roman Missal and Breviary till within my own lifetime, and the service-books of the Arch-diocese of Quebec were not ousted to make way for the Roman service-books until less than forty years ago. This modern "Roman Empire" of ecclesiasticism is fundamentally different from the "Catholic Church" of even the Middle Age, even in France, or Spain, or Italy itself. To think otherwise (as, I fear, most American students do) is a very heresy of history. I have now to tell you that the development of Protestantism has been even more extreme. It is not too much to say that most of the things which the early Protestant regarded as matters of principle and was ready to die for, are by the modern Protestant regarded with scorn. The Individualist demand for boundless freedom is the only point that remains to bind the end of that movement to the beginning. Come with me, and examine that beginning, and see for yourselves whether what I have said be true.

For (here is a fact of tremendous import) those Protestant Radicals of the sixteenth century, reared in the unconstitutional atmosphere of a dogmatic age, had also the poison of dogmatism in their blood. They be-



lieved in tyranny. They thought of the Kingdom of God as a strong power which should compel men to think rightly and act rightly. When they came to have a vision of truth and duty different from the general fashion of thought in the existing Church, they simply assumed that the existing Church was desperately corrupted, and that they were the remnant of God's elect. They thought it their duty to make a fresh start with a pure Church, ordering and compelling in the same old way. Our Puritan forefathers are an obvious illustration. They revolted against the tyranny which bade them believe what they could not believe, and do what their consciences would not allow them to do. That was the way in which they regarded the situation, though in England, it should be said, nothing was demanded in the way of direct profession of belief that even Puritans found intolerable, in their first days. But it was not tyranny that they objected to, but a domination of what they thought to be in any point falsehood and wrong.

"In any point," I say. For here is a new horror, resulting from the union of Individualism and Dogmatism, the nightmare dream of an infallibility of the individual Christian, infallible at every turn! In the Middle Age men had been taught that the Church was an infallible organism. When it chose to speak with authority, what it said was not to be questioned. A rising conscience, compelling many men to refuse things which the Church had been teaching, compelled them also to deny the Church's infallibility. But that there must be *some* infallible guidance available for Christian men to lean on, was one of their fundamental presuppositions. "He shall guide you into all the truth," "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things," were passages most dear to them, and in that

time of swirling confusion, they interpreted such passages in a sense which all history makes for us impossible. They were driven, therefore, to a new theory of infallibility. "Infallibility," they said, "is the gift of every truly good man." That was the original hope and faith of Protestantism, the vision of God revealing all truth and duty to every earnest seeker, quite by himself. The holy man was to know the truth certainly and fully in his own communion with God. He was thus to be made God's messenger and agent for the right ordering of the world. If any man was found to have a different vision—this was a necessary outcome of the theory of individual infallibility—that would be a sign that such an one was not a man of God. With such a theory, as far removed as possible from any vision of liberty—for the only true liberty in this world of ours is the liberty of different men to go different ways—with such a theory, I say, the Protestant Radicals started out on a "Mayflower" voyage of discovery, expecting to plant a pure and perfect Church in a Christian Utopia, which should be a land of everlasting spring.

You know the result. So many visions have danced before the eyes of so many earnest men that churches have multiplied like mushrooms. At first rival churches of this individualist type used to denounce one another—they were bound to—as "Synagogues of Satan." "I look upon toleration," said one of Harvard University's early presidents, "I look upon toleration as the first-born of all abominations" (President Oakes, Election Sermon, 1673. Quoted in Coit's *Puritanism*, p. 288).<sup>21</sup> Then gradually that better day came on when

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<sup>21</sup> Says the Presbyterian Edwards in his *Gangraena*, published in 1647: "A toleration is the grand design of the devil. It is the masterpiece, compendious, ready, and sure way to destroy all religion, lay all waste, and bring in all evils: it is the most transcendent, catholic, and fundamental evil for this kingdom of any

they were forced to recognize that men of equal goodness and religious earnestness may differ indefinitely all around the circle of human thought. The Protestant world awoke to a bitter, shamed confession that there was no such thing as infallibility in this world of men, that nobody could ever be certain of anything in the way of truth, that it was a monstrous thing for one man to say to another, "You must believe as I do." Of late years, the conclusion has been spreading rapidly that it is a foolish and shameful thing for earnest men to limit their fellowship, even their religious fellowship, with any other earnest men, because of any differences of religious opinion. The voyage of discovery has ended, like the old endeavors to find the lost Atlantis, in adding many a valuable element to the chart of human knowledge and experience, but establishing beyond peradventure the impossibility of finding that particular object which it went out to seek.

that can be imagined. As original sin is the most fundamental sin of all sins—having the seed and spawn of all in it—so toleration hath all errors in it and all evils. It is against the whole stream and current of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments, both in matters of faith and manners. It overthrows all relations, both political, ecclesiastical, and economical; and whereas other evils, whether errors of judgment or practice, be but against some one or few places of Scripture, this is against all. This is the Abaddon-Apollyon—the destroyer of all religion, the abomination of desolation, the liberty of perdition, as Austin calls it; and therefore the devil follows it night and day, working mightily in many by writing books for it and other ways, all the devils in hell and their instruments being at work to promote toleration." *Gangraena* l. 58, quoted in W. J. E. Bennett's *The Church's Broken Unity*, II. 153.

Poor Edwards was worried because the "Independents" of his day, what we should now call "Congregationalists," seemed to want religious liberty not only for themselves, but for everybody else. He need not have troubled himself. As soon as they got the upper hand, either in England or in America, they thought as ill of toleration as Edwards himself, and persecuted Presbyterians, Churchmen, Baptists, Quakers, with awful diligence.

## IV.—THE RESULTS AS THEY APPEAR TO-DAY.

I come to the results of the schemes of the Absolutist and the Radical. I think them very bad.

But here I shall be met by an instinctive movement of the minds of some who hear me. "Surely," will be their thought—"Surely, the last four centuries have been centuries of progress and prosperity. The century just passed has been a century of advance such as the world has never seen." Yes! Certainly. But stop and think out what you mean. "The last century has seen a marvellous progress in natural science, and that progress has been the result, and the reward, of a system of unfettered liberty." Yes, again, but of liberty guided by an authority of things settled in the past, and steadied by coöperation. That is exactly my constitutionalist idea of liberty. "Next, the social order has made wonderful progress, too." Again, yes! The social order has so far advanced that brain makes conquests now instead of brawn, and there is more room for many conquerors side by side. Furthermore, those who are successful in the social struggle have luxury beyond men's former dreams. But I look at city slums, and at the problems of the unemployed, and at child-slavery, and at the bitter discontent of workingmen before the conquests of robber capitalists—not all capitalists are robbers, but enormous wealth obtained by enormous robbery is at least a very familiar feature of our modern life—I look at these, I say, and I ask, How far has the Church succeeded in making the kingdom over the world to be the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ? That is what the Church is for. That is the test by which to measure the success of either religious tyranny unchecked or religious liberty unguided.

(a) Forty years ago I should have said that the

Tridentine Absolutist method was a bad one, but that it worked well with the uneducated, and with minds not quickened to intellectual ambition. I should have added, to be sure, that it was part of the Church's business to quicken intellectual activity, and draw men out to serve God with the mind. Now I must say more, for now I see more. Now I know that all humanity is bound to have an intellectual awakening sometime. It is part of God's plan. If His Church does not help Him to wake them, He will wake them Himself. When that happens, the men who do wake up and think that they find the Church a selfish oppressor, will turn against the Church, and if they find no other representative of God to teach them the divine unselfishness, they will turn against God as well. We can see it to-day in France, in Italy, in Spain. A priest of our Church, who was formerly a Roman priest in New York City, tells me that it is said among the Roman clergy there—"The Italians are the worst Catholics that come to this country." An Italian in my own town said to me, "I come from the country of the Abruzzi, which used to belong to the States of the Church. We felt over there that the Church was a bad governor, and when people from there come to this country, the men at any rate don't have much to do with the Church." To the same effect speak the recent disturbances in Northern Spain, where churches and monasteries, priests and monks and nuns, were special objects of popular violence. Of the vivid example given by France I need not say anything. You can read of it day by day.

(b) How is it with the scheme of the Protestant Radicals, which began in mysticism, with an assurance of personal infallibility, and has swung round to the opposite side of the circle, to end in the rationalism of "Nothing is infallibly true"? On that side, also, my



sense of failure has deepened sadly in forty years. The element of disintegration into 150 sects remains about as it was then. If there are a dozen more, that does not count. I do think that we now feel that disintegration much more deeply than we did forty years ago, and that that deeper sensitiveness is the gift and work of the Spirit of God. There is another kind of disintegration, however, that is becoming far more evident than in former days. Forty years ago, Dr. Ewer preached his brilliant sermons on "The Failure of Protestantism," and declared that Protestantism had a logical course, which it was bound to follow. Protestant Churches must inevitably become Unitarian, and Unitarian Churches descend into pure Natural Religion, and finally into Agnosticism and mere Ethical Culture. His predictions were received with furious indignation. "Evangelical Protestant Churches in danger of giving up their Evangelical character? Never!" If I should venture to repeat that prediction to-day, and if my voice were powerful enough to make my friends in the great Evangelical Denominations hear, a host of their members and ministers would answer me with one consent, "Well, brother, why should they not? Why should differences of theology divide men anyhow? Why should questions of theology concern men?" Certainly, there is a very remarkable tendency in these days toward the disintegration of old beliefs. Our Radicals of to-day, touched by a rising spirit of sympathy and brotherhood for which I bless God, and which, I trust, I share, aspire to attain to a universal religion by stripping off everything as mere impediment, to which any reasonable minds object. The result, they hold, will be a truly rational religion, on which all men can unite. But, in fact, the necessary result of that plan must be that their religion will be limited to that portion of God's revealed mind which the



minds least in sympathy with God's mind, among earnest men, are ready to receive. It will not be a supremely rational religion, but an exceptionally narrow and shallow religion, for it is an attempt to impose upon all mankind, as matter of commanding nobleness, what is really the result of the limitations of the narrowest capacities among good men. It is quite true that the Church has always made its own way among men by meeting needs rather than by proving claims, but a Church which shall undertake to meet men's needs by making a list of the things which they think they want, and even then offering them only what they all *agree* in wanting, is foredoomed to failure. It does seem to me that the Protestant Churches are moving fast toward a Church Unity based on that sort of residuum. I think that such a Church of residuum will come to birth. I predict also, that when men have succeeded in constituting such a Church as that, it will die on their hands, full soon, like the horse that learned to live without eating, in the old Greek jest. If I read the times aright, their lesson is a double one. Tyranny in religion leads to a blatant Infidelity which hates the idea of God and is bitter against the Church. Formless freedom in religion, freedom with no bony structure to give its body shape, leads to a cold Agnosticism, which knows no God, and has no use for a Church, except for somebody else to profit by.

#### V.—THE BOW OF HOPE.

The kingdoms of men have had great prosperity of late years, though not yet the greatest. The Kingdom of God, divided against itself, has not had great prosperity. Yet I see signs of hope. Two such signs are (1) a real sense of failure, a sense that many things are

very wrong in our life as the people of God, and (2) a rising demand for brotherhood and that those who love Jesus Christ should love one another. These are such signs, if I mistake not, as usher in a new age. Another sign of hope is the new study of old things, a growing interest in the study of Church History, a really studious endeavor to get back to the facts of the development of Christianity, and especially to find its true beginnings. To be sure, much is taught as history which I think to be false and foolish, historical views that shift one into another like those of a kaleidoscope, as brief and as unreal. But patient study does bring out facts, and in the long run facts prevail over theories. Every decade brings out more things on which scholars do agree. Still another sign of hope is the reaction, certainly coming in upon us, in great power, from Individualism to Collectivism. We have learned lessons of the value of the individual soul, which we shall never, I trust, forget. But we need now to learn more lessons of an opposite kind, lessons of coöperation—and, please God, we shall. Four hundred years ago, the Church failed to understand and meet, promptly enough and generously enough, the needs of a rising Individualism. Will the Church have wisdom and grace to enter into this new movement in the other direction so as both to guide it and be helped by it? I have hope.

One thing let us remember! Our Lord Jesus Christ did not make His religion to satisfy the human heart. He did better than that. He made the human heart to fit the great facts which in His religion He has graciously revealed. We can never prosper in our religious work till we receive His own religion according to His own plan. Father Tyrrell used to say<sup>22</sup> that "one age

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<sup>22</sup> This quotation is from a memorial notice by C. E. Osborne in the *Church Times* of July 23, 1909

sacrificed liberty to authority, and another authority to liberty. The problem we have to solve is to effect a synthesis by which we shall discover their respective functions in the light of the mind and spirit of Christ, which unites things apparently the most opposite, and in which all things are made new. *Cor ad cor loquitur.*"

"Show the house to the house of Israel." If our Lord Jesus Christ really has a plan for this so needed synthesis of liberty and authority, then the best hope of our American Christianity lies in getting that plan to be made known, and loved, and followed, among our people. To that end I offer you for a motto some words of a recent English writer—the Rev. Percy Dearmer, in that most wise and suggestive book, *Body and Soul* (p. 96)—"Our business is to try the spirits, not to refuse experiments, nor to shut our eyes to results, but to avoid controversy as much as possible, and with fair minds, and friendly hearts, to enlarge the area of agreement and to seek after the truth."











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God's balance of faith

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